

Palliative Care and Lung Disease: Getting the Support You Need



What is palliative care?

If you are living with a chronic lung disease like COPD or pulmonary fibrosis, palliative care may provide you with an extra layer of support. Palliative care is a specialized medical care that focuses on your needs and provides relief from symptoms and stress of the disease. The focus is on improving your quality of life.

How can palliative care help someone living with lung disease?

Treatment Planning: Palliative care teams can help you and your family understand your treatment options and goals, plan for the future and offer practical advice about talking to loved ones. They also offer assistance with making difficult decisions.

Surgery: Palliative care may be helpful in managing postoperative pain.

Stress: Palliative care may help reduce the anxiety, fear and depression that some patients with lung disease and caregivers feel as they face lung disease. This type of care may include medication, massage therapy, guided imagery, counseling and more.

Navigating the medical system: Palliative care specialists may help get all of the members of your care team on the “same page” to help you make sure you are getting the care you need. Palliative care social workers are also instrumental in helping design a discharge plan for you that meets your needs and those of your family.

First and foremost, the palliative care team is concerned with helping you and your family get the support you need.





Questions for your care team:

- Ask your doctor for a palliative care referral as soon as you can.
- If there is no palliative care specialist where you are receiving care, visit getpalliativecare.org to find a specialist near you.
- Before making an appointment, call your insurance company to see what costs are covered with palliative care.
- Meet the palliative care team and ask questions. Be open about your treatment goals and any symptoms you may be experiencing.

List your own questions here:

Where do I receive palliative care?

Palliative care is provided in a variety of settings including the hospital, outpatient clinics, home and long term care facilities.

Does my insurance pay for palliative care?

Palliative care may be covered under your insurance plan. Talk with your insurance provider about the details of your coverage. If costs concern you, a social worker or financial consultant from the palliative care team can help you.

How do I get palliative care?

Ask for it! Tell your doctors, nurses, family and caregivers that you want palliative care. You can also search for a palliative care specialist at getpalliativecare.org.

How do I know if palliative care is right for me?

Palliative care may be an option for you if you suffer from pain, stress or other side effects due to your lung disease. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of your lung disease and along with other treatments.

What can I expect from palliative care?

The palliative care team works in partnership with your own doctor to provide support for you and your family. The team provides symptom management, extra time for communication and helps navigate the health system.



Who provides palliative care?

Palliative care is provided by a team of specialists including palliative care doctors, nurses and social workers. Massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, spiritual care advisors and others might also be part of the team.

Adapted from the Center to Advance Palliative Care's document, *Palliative Care: What You Should Know*.