

Additional information

Other useful information about palliative care and its services may be accessed via the below websites:

www.pallcarevic.asn.au

www.palliativecare.org.au

www.caresearch.com.au

Palliative Care Consultation Service

Information for patients and families

About the service

Your treating doctor or nurse has referred you to the palliative care consultation service. Once the referral has been processed by the consultation team, a member of the team will visit you on your ward.

The consultation service team can review patients in any unit of St Vincent's Hospital, St George's Hospital or St Vincent's Private Hospital.

The team welcomes the opportunity to meet with your family and, with your permission, may want to contact them to make an appointment for a meeting.

What is palliative care?

Palliative care is the care of people who have a progressive incurable illness. The focus is on treating symptoms and helping to make changes and decisions that aim to improve quality of life.

Palliative care also involves caring for the family and friends of the person who is ill and recognises that they may need some help and advice to support them in their role.

Palliative care can be provided in hospitals, at outpatient clinics, in specialist palliative care units/hospices such as Caritas Christi, aged care residences, with your GP at their clinic and in private homes.

Palliative care consultation service personnel

The consultation team consists of Palliative Care Nurse Consultants and Specialist Palliative Care Doctors.

Reasons for referral

You may have been referred to the palliative care consultation service for one or more of the following reasons:

- help with pain and other symptom management
- to assist you, your family and the referring medical or surgical unit in decision making about ongoing care
- to plan and engage options for community support
- to contribute to the discussion about alternative care options if returning home is difficult
- emotional support for you and your family
- involvement in family meetings to discuss your ongoing care
- education/information for you, your family or other staff
- to provide or plan care at the end of life.

Palliative care outpatient clinic

As part of the palliative care consultation service, there is a weekly outpatient clinic. The team will arrange an appointment for you to be seen in the clinic on discharge if appropriate. Your General Practitioner or specialist doctor can also refer you to this clinic.

This clinic is held in the Cancer Centre, Level 1 Daly Wing, St Vincent's Hospital, Tel: 9288 3155.

Alternatively the team who routinely review patients attending a variety of other clinics can arrange to review you when you return to your medical, surgical or cancer services outpatient/day centre appointment.

Other palliative care services

Community palliative care services

There are community palliative care services that cover all areas of Victoria. They review patients in their own home and offer specialist support and advice. Visit the Palliative Care Victoria website (www.pallcarevic.asn.au) for more information.

Inpatient palliative care units (hospice)

Reasons for admission to an inpatient palliative care facility include:

- symptom management
- restorative care – aims to improve function and independence when a patient has become deconditioned
- respite care – enables carers to have a break or rest
- care at the end of life.

Contacting the palliative care consultation service

If you or someone from your family would like to speak to the consultation service, you can contact us by:

- asking your nurse to page us on 1335 giving your name and the ward/bed details
- calling 9288 2827 (for enquiries made outside the hospital) and leaving a brief message if there is no-one present in the office.

The hours for the service are 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Every effort is made to respond within one working day.

Please do not hesitate to contact the service if we can be of assistance.