

When it's time
to focus on you, and
not your illness...

It's time
to call VITAS

A young woman with brown hair, wearing a purple long-sleeved top, is smiling and pushing a wheelchair. An elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing a white cardigan over a light-colored top, is sitting in the wheelchair and looking upwards with a thoughtful expression. The background is a bright, indoor setting, possibly a home or a care facility.

VITAS[®]
Healthcare

When a person is coping with a serious illness, it can be difficult to find the right kind of care and support. Too often the quality of life deteriorates as treatments and side effects escalate.

Are you or a loved one:

- Rushing to the emergency room in the middle of the night?
- Calling the doctor repeatedly with symptoms and questions?
- Being admitted to the hospital or ICU again?
- In pain or frightened?

It's time for a transition

Despite your best efforts, you may no longer be getting the help you need.

What you need is a calm and thoughtful approach to care and a plan to address concerns before they become crises—before another trip to the ER. This is when hospice care can do the most good.



When your doctor says, “Hospice,” it’s because the care you’re getting is no longer the care you need. Hospice controls pain and manages symptoms. Hospice makes sure you are calm, comfortable—and at home. You have a whole hospice team scheduled to visit you. Teamwork makes the difference.

Your team will answer your questions or make a house call, any time, day or night. They want to know if you’re feeling frightened in the middle of the night, or you are having difficulty breathing, or you’ve run out of your medicine. When you feel the need to go to the emergency room, they want to know that too. The goal of your hospice team is to make you feel better and to make your life better while helping you remain at home.

If your health declines and you need more or different care, hospice addresses those needs with gradual, non-crisis transitions. Instead of trauma in the middle of the night, there is time to talk with your team and your family, time to try treatments and make adjustments to assure that you are comfortable. You are at home and your health is under control with hospice.

Don’t wait to call hospice

Most people with serious illness wish to be comfortable and at home, doing what they like to do, able to see family and friends. That’s the goal of hospice.

What’s more, evidence indicates that, given enough time, hospice care can greatly improve the quality of life of the patient and his or her family:

- According to a Gallup poll, nine out of 10 Americans say that if they knew they had just six months to live, they would prefer to be cared for in their own home or a family member's home.¹
- Research published in the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* found that Medicare beneficiaries who chose hospice care lived, on average, 29 days longer than similar patients who did not take advantage of hospice.²
- VITAS® Healthcare patient surveys indicate that 99 percent of families wish they had known about hospice sooner.³

Experts agree that hospice care is most beneficial when it is provided for months, rather than weeks or days. Get the information you need now, so that when you need additional support in order to remain comfortably at home, you'll be ready to make the transition to hospice.

Your doctor can help determine when the time is right, but here are some symptoms to watch for:

- Repeat trips to the emergency room or hospital admissions
- Unrelieved pain
- Frequent infections
- Weight loss/difficulty swallowing
- Inability to move about on your own
- Nausea/vomiting
- Shortness of breath/oxygen dependence
- The burden of treatment outweighs the benefits



When you have any of these symptoms in conjunction with a life-limiting illness, consider the transition to hospice.

What does VITAS do?

VITAS® Healthcare brings hospice to your home. We control your symptoms and preserve your dignity. We help you transition from curative care to hospice care, or from hospital to home. We help your family make the transition too, to focus on you, the patient—not your illness.

Your VITAS team will include:

- Physician
- Registered nurse
- Social worker
- Hospice aide
- Chaplain
- Community volunteer
- Bereavement specialist

Although a hospice physician is part of the VITAS team, your personal doctor can continue to be involved in your care. In fact, we welcome the participation of your primary care physician in managing your care.

VITAS provides all four levels of hospice care, as defined by Medicare. You may receive one level or several, depending on your needs.

- Routine home care
- Intensive Comfort Care® when the patient at home needs acute symptom management up to 24 hours per day when medically appropriate.
- Inpatient care when care cannot be managed at home
- Respite care for the patient when the family caregiver must be away

There is no need to defer hospice care due to financial concerns. The Medicare Hospice Benefit covers 100 percent of the cost of care related to the terminal illness. In most states, Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) also provides hospice coverage, as do most private insurance plans. Coverage includes everything involved in hospice care, from nurse and physician visits to therapy, medication, equipment and supplies related to the terminal illness.

¹ National Hospice Organization-commissioned Gallup poll, 1992.

² Connor SR, Pyenson B, Fitch K, Spence C, Iwasaki K. Comparing hospice and non-hospice patient survival among patients who die within a three-year window. *J Pain Symptom Manage.* 2007 Mar;33(3):238-46.

³ Data on file at VITAS.

Download Our Free Hospice Discussion Guide



- Make the right decisions for you and your loved ones
- Get answers to your hospice questions
- Learn how to start the hospice conversation

Go to HospiceCanHelp.com

For more information call 800.723.3233

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