



Can Suncoast Hospice Help? A Caregivers Perspective

Caregivers often wonder, "When should we call hospice?" While there is no simple answer, there are some things to keep in mind as you care for someone with a serious illness. **Suncoast Hospice** can help you and the person you're caring for, prepare for and adapt to the changes that illness brings. As a member of Empath Health, Suncoast Hospice offers a continuum of care for those with chronic or advanced illnesses.

Questions to Consider

- What changes have I seen in my loved one's health in the past year or six months?
- How do I expect their condition to change in the next year?
- What am I most concerned about right now?
- Am I feeling sad, exhausted, angry, isolated, guilty, anxious or depressed because of the changes in our lives?
- What decisions are we facing about treatments and/or medications?
- How has our quality of life been affected by this illness or its treatment?
- What changes have I noticed in their ability to get around and take care of daily activities in the past six months such as bathing, dressing and eating?
- How is pain or any other symptom affecting our quality of life?
- Are we making more frequent trips to the emergency room or hospital?
- What is truly important to the person in my care? To me? To others close to us?
- What kinds of assistance might free up more time or energy to spend on those things that are most important to us?
- Who can I call when I have a question or concern in the middle of the night or during weekends?
- How are the responsibilities of caregiving affecting my daily life? My health?
- What is our back-up plan if something happens to me?

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Questions to Consider

Keep in Mind

- You do not have to wait for your doctor to suggest hospice. You may contact Suncoast Hospice directly to talk about your situation and ask questions.
- Establishing a trusting relationship with a new care provider can take time. When your care provider has a chance to get to know you, the person who is ill, and other close friends or family members, they become better equipped to offer care that honors your choices and priorities.
- Everyone is unique. The earlier someone begins receiving care, the more information care teams will have about what is normal for that person.
- Attention to the concerns and needs of personal caregivers – family and friends – is a fundamental part of what hospice care is all about.

Talk to Suncoast Hospice

- When looking for care that is guided by personal priorities and choices
- When pain or symptoms are interfering with quality of life
- When making decisions about treatments
- When you are looking for information about advance directives that help communicate personal choices about end-of-life care
- When loss, caregiving and grief are affecting your life
- When looking for information about illness, dying and grief
- When you aren't sure what to do next

Suncoast Hospice offers guidance and support for you and your loved one.

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For more information about how Suncoast Hospice can help:

Call (727) 467-7423 | SuncoastHospice.org

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PHD-19-0474



Practical Tips From Other Caregivers

- Protect your quiet time; use the answering machine to screen calls, hang a do not disturb sign on the front door when resting.
- Make simple meals; make twice as much and freeze the extras.
- Use paper goods to shorten clean-up time.
- Cut down on shopping trips by buying extra items you know you will need.
- Create a schedule. You might not follow it exactly, but knowing what the plan is for the day can reduce anxiety and help you feel more in control.
- Pick your battles: ask yourself if something is really worth an argument or cross word.
- Keep a small amount of cash on hand so you can easily reimburse helpful friends and neighbors when they run errands.
- Establish visiting hours so you may have support and privacy.
- Choose a willing family member or friend to be in charge of relaying updates by phone or email to others who are concerned.

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