



**Homestead Hospice & Palliative Care**  
**877-355-4472**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Hospice?**

Hospice is a philosophy of care that treats the whole patient. A specialized team of healthcare professionals address the physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social needs of the patients and family members. The goal of hospice is to bring about peace and dignity throughout life's last journey.

### **When is the right time to ask about hospice?**

Now is the best time to learn more about hospice and ask questions about what to expect from hospice services. Although end-of-life care may be difficult to discuss, it is best for family members to share their wishes long before it becomes a concern. This can greatly reduce stress when the time for hospice is needed. By having these discussions in advance, patients are not forced into uncomfortable situations. Instead, patients can make an educated decision that includes the advice and input of family members and loved ones.

### **How does hospice care begin?**

Typically, hospice care starts as soon as a formal request or a 'referral' is made by the patient's doctor. Often a hospice program representative will make an effort to visit the patient within 48 hours of that referral, providing the visit meets the needs and schedule of the patient and family/primary caregiver. Usually, hospice care is ready to begin within a day or two of the referral. However, in urgent situations, hospice services may begin sooner.

### **Will I be the only hospice patient that the hospice staff serves?**

Every hospice patient has access to a hospice volunteer, registered nurse, social worker, home health aide, and chaplain (also known as the interdisciplinary team). For each patient and family, the interdisciplinary team writes a care plan with the patient/family that is used to make sure the patient and family receive the care they need from the team. Typically, full-time registered nurses provide care to about a dozen different families. Social workers usually work with about twice the number of patients/families as nurses. If needed, home health aides, who provide personal care to the patient, will visit most frequently.

All visits, however, are based on the patient and family needs as described in the care plan and the condition of the patient during the course of illness. The frequency of volunteers and spiritual care is often dependent upon the family request and the availability of these services. Travel requirements and other factors may cause some variation in how many patients each hospice staff serves.

### **Is hospice available after hours?**

Hospice care is available 'on-call' after the administrative office has closed, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Most hospices have nurses available to respond to a call for help within minutes, if necessary. At Homestead Hospice, we have chaplains and social workers on call as well.