When is the right time for palliative care?

Palliative care helps through all stages of many illnesses. It is most helpful when started early in your care and can be provided at the same time as treatments aimed at curing your illness. It will assist in navigating the complex health system.

What if I’m interested in palliative care?

If you think you would benefit from palliative care, please ask for it. Tell your doctor or nurse that you would like to add a palliative care specialist to your healthcare team and request a consult. You may also contact DeKalb Medical palliative care specialist Deanna Richardson, M.N., M.P.H., FNP-BC directly by calling 404.501.1789 or 770.841.1862. She can assist you with difficult decisions, including treatment options and end-of-life issues, if needed.

Serving the Community Since 1961

DeKalb Medical is a not-for-profit hospital system that includes the 451-bed DeKalb Medical at North Decatur, the 40-bed DeKalb Medical Long Term Acute Care at Downtown Decatur and the 100-bed DeKalb Medical at Hillandale in Lithonia. A leader in progressive medical technology delivered by a highly qualified and caring staff, the hospital system serves approximately 500,000 patients annually and offers a variety of community outreach programs.

How can you help support the Palliative Care program at DeKalb Medical?

Patients and family members who would like to make a donation in support of the DeKalb Medical Palliative Care program may call the DeKalb Medical Foundation at 404.501.5956.
What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tive) focuses on providing patients with the relief from the pain, symptoms and stress associated with serious illness.

Palliative care (or comfort care) is given to improve quality of life when you have a serious or life-threatening illness. It is provided by an interdisciplinary team including medical and nursing specialists, social workers, clergy and other staff. All team members work together to meet the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of you and your family.

Palliative care can be provided at the same time as curative medical treatments and strives to provide symptom and pain relief while helping you explore potential care options. Palliative care specialists can also help you make informed decisions and set goals for your care.

Palliative Care can help by:
- Providing comfort/supporting interventions
- Managing symptoms to relieve suffering
- Listening to and addressing concerns
- Asking questions of the healthcare team
- Working through tough decisions
- Finding care and resources after the hospital stay

You may have a hard time dealing with another’s advice. You may also feel the need to remain strong for your loved ones. All of these are normal feelings that should be acknowledged and addressed. A palliative care professional can help you explore these feelings to find the best way for you to cope with them.

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

Palliative care may be right for you or your loved one if symptoms occur from a serious illness or injury including:
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Lung Disease
- Cardiac disease/stroke
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Dementia
- Serious trauma
- Kidney failure

By working closely with your physician, the palliative care specialist will assist with:
- Pain control
- Symptom relief
- Emotional and spiritual support

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Information provided by Caring Connections.