

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

If a nurse is not with them, please call a doctor or nurse who will attend to verify the death. You may wish to call other family or friends who might wish to visit. You can stay with your loved one until you are ready to leave. When you are ready, we will discuss about taking personal belongings.

## AFTER THE DEATH

You will be invited back to the Hospice to collect the Death Certificate and we will provide advice on what you will need to do following the death. This will also be an opportunity to view your loved one prior to them going to an undertakers of your choice.

This leaflet is aimed at preparing you for what may happen, but everyone is individual.

If you have any concerns, or questions, please speak to a member of staff or call the ward on 01474 538505.

*ellenor.*<sup>+</sup>

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE END OF LIFE

Part of providing the best care and support for families, means being there for as long as a family needs us.

You can help us to be there, when we're needed.

Please speak to a member of staff or visit our website for ways you can help.

Thank you

[www.ellenor.org](http://www.ellenor.org)

ellenor is the operating name of Ellenor Lions Hospices a charity registered in England and Wales (1121561), and a company limited by guarantee (6302132). Registered office at Coldharbour Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 7HQ.

ellenor cares for the whole family

## WHEN A PERSON IS APPROACHING END OF LIFE

The doctors or nurses will explain that there has been a change in their condition, if they believe that they are within the last days or hours of life. Their care will be reviewed regularly. This leaflet is to explain some of the changes and to reassure you. You may have been involved in the discussion regarding planning of care at this time.. If their condition improves, the care plan may be reviewed.

## COMFORT

The care staff will ensure that their needs are met. Please advise if you feel that they are not, for whatever reason. You can support in many ways, such as spending time together, sharing memories and news of family and friends. The sound of your voice can be reassuring.

## MEDICATIONS

Medicine that is not helpful may be stopped and new items may be prescribed. Some may struggle to swallow and it may be necessary to give medicines in an injectable form. We normally use a battery operated syringe pump. Medicines will only be used when needed.

## REDUCED NEED FOR NOURISHMENT

Loss of interest in, and a reduced need for food and drink is normal when dying. Fluids given by drip will only be used where it is helpful and not harmful. This decision will be explained to you by the medical staff.

## INCREASED DROWSINESS

They may spend more time sleeping, be drowsy whilst awake or withdrawn and show less interest in their surroundings. Eventually, they may lapse into periods of unconsciousness. For some, it may be short, others may be for days. However, they will still be aware of your voice and touch.

## CHANGES IN BREATHING

When death is close, breathing patterns may change. Sometimes there are long pauses between breathes, or it may become fast and shallow. Occasionally a rattle or bubbling may develop. This is caused by mucus that they are unable to cough up. Moving position may help. If they are breathing through their mouth, moistening the lips and tongue and applying lip salve will provide comfort.

## OTHER CHANGES

The skin can become pale and moist, or mottled. Their temperature may rise and fall- adjusting the bed covers, may help. Feet and hands can become cold and blue as blood circulation reduces.

Staff will do all they can to meet faith and cultural needs. If you have particular requests, please speak to the staff so we can plan to support these.

**Most people die in peace and comfort.**