



# QUESTIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ANSWERS

## Pain and Palliative Medicine Service

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### **What should you know about palliative (pal-lee-uh-tiv) care?**

“Palliate” means “to lessen.” So, palliative care lessens the pain, other bad symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is the best quality of life for patients. Palliative care can be given at any stage of a serious or life threatening illness. It is given right along with other treatments for the illness.

### **Who can get palliative care?**

Any patient who has pain or other bad symptoms of a serious illness. Many patients who get palliative care have cancer, heart disease or another illness that threatens their lives.

### **What are the benefits of palliative care?**

Your pain will be kept under control. You will get help for breathing problems and nausea if you need it. You will be able to eat and sleep better. Your medical treatments will be easier to bear. You will be more able to carry on with your daily life.

### **What about Pain?**

Patients often worry about having pain from cancer. However, most pain can be controlled. It is very important for you to talk to your doctors and nurses about your pain. You are the only one who knows how much pain you are in. Pain can be measured. You will be asked how strong your pain is. A pain rating scale will be used to help doctors and nurses measure your pain. One example of a pain scale rates pain from 0 to 10. “0” means no pain, and “10” means the worst pain you can imagine. The doctor or nurse will help you use this or another pain scale. Your pain is very important and can be treated. Palliative care helps treat your pain so you can live as pain-free as possible.

### **Who provides palliative care?**

A team made up of doctors, nurses and others who have training in palliative care. The team may also have a social worker, chaplain and others to meet patients' special needs. The team will help you better understand your illness. You will be better able to make choices about your medical care. **Where can I get palliative care?**

Most places that offer medical care also offer palliative care. It can be at a hospital, nursing home, a hospice or in your own home. St Vincent Charity Hospital has an inpatient palliative care service. Your primary care doctor can ask for a consult from palliative care services. The service helps with pain and other symptom complaints.

The service also helps patients and families make difficult decisions. Goals are set based on patient and family values. Long-term care plans are completed. Care in the home can be arranged.

### **Will my insurance pay for this care?**

Most insurance will cover all or part of this, the same as for any medical care. This is also true for Medicare and Medicaid. The palliative care team can help answer your questions about how to pay for any treatment.

### **How can I get palliative care?**

Talk to your primary care doctor or nurse. Ask them any questions you have about palliative care. Ask them to explain palliative care to your family. Let your family know that you need this kind of care. You can also contact the palliative care team at **216.241.5453** for more information.

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