

# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PALLIATIVE CARE?

**Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. Care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the individual and the family.**

## **Palliative care:**

- Includes a specially trained team that provides care in a holistic manner.
- Provides an additional layer of support based on needs of the individual.
- Is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness.
- Can be provided along with curative treatment.

*To help you better understand what palliative care is and is not, read on for common myths and facts:*



**MISSOURI HOSPICE**  

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*& Palliative Care  
Association*

# TOP 8 MYTHS ABOUT PALLIATIVE CARE

## MYTH 1

**PALLIATIVE CARE IS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE AT THE END OF THEIR LIVES**

**A person can still continue with curative treatments.**

Palliative care is for anyone who has a serious illness experiencing decreased quality of life because of symptoms related to their illness or treatments.

## MYTH 2

**PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE ARE THE SAME TYPE OF CARE**

Although both types of care focus on improving quality of life of the individual and their family through expert symptom management and supportive care, Palliative Care is offered to all individuals at any age and at any stage in a serious illness. For more information about palliative or hospice care in Missouri visit the MHPCA website and click on the Palliative Care portal.

## MYTH 3

**IN PALLIATIVE CARE THEY WILL ONLY TREAT MY PAIN WITH MORPHINE**

Palliative care services offers both medications and non-medications to treat pain. Complementary therapies (massage, acupuncture, Reiki, pet therapy, etc.) and other types of non-pain medications are also used for pain control. At times, morphine and other opioids (pain medications) are prescribed to control pain.

## MYTH 4

**PALLIATIVE CARE IS ONLY USED TO TREAT PAIN**

Pain is a common symptom for a palliative care referral, however there are many other symptoms an individual could be experiencing that would qualify them for a palliative care consult: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, anxiety, depression, itching, restlessness, spiritual distress.....to name a few.

## MYTH 5

**PALLIATIVE CARE SOUNDS LIKE IT WOULD BE EXPENSIVE FOR ME**

Palliative care is a medical specialty just like every other in the medical field (i.e cardiology, neurology, oncology, etc.). Most insurance covers palliative care visits the same way they would cover other specialty visits. It is recommended you contact your insurance company before scheduling a visit in the community.

## MYTH 6

**IF I AM SEEN BY A PALLIATIVE CARE SPECIALIST, I WILL NO LONGER SEE MY OTHER PHYSICIANS**

Palliative care providers are specialty trained consultants that work with you and your medical team to assist in the management of your symptoms and to improve your quality of life. They do not replace your other providers.

## MYTH 7

**PALLIATIVE CARE IS ONLY FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER**

**Palliative care is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness.**

Care is available for people with kidney, liver, lung, and heart disease, diabetes, dementia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, and many others.

## MYTH 8

**PALLIATIVE CARE MEANS MY DOCTOR HAS GIVEN UP HOPE FOR ME**

**There is always hope. Palliative care does not mean giving up.**

The goal of palliative care is to empower you to establish goals as your illness progresses or your course changes—all the while, helping you live each moment as fully as possible. Palliative care serves as an extra layer of support and a way to maximize your quality of life, explore options for care, and assist in navigating the healthcare system.



*For more information on  
Palliative Care visit  
[www.missourihospice.org](http://www.missourihospice.org)*

## **How to Get Palliative Care?**

**The first step is to talk to your doctor.**

**Ask your doctor for a palliative care referral to get palliative care services in your area.**

**Whether you are in the hospital or at home a palliative care team can help you.**

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