

Specialist palliative care team

What is palliative care?

Palliative care can help you, and those important to you, to cope with problems associated with life-threatening or life-limiting illness. We understand that psychological, spiritual, as well as family and financial worries can be just as important as physical problems. Some people need palliative care early on in their illness, others need it as they approach the end of their life.

Who are the specialist palliative care team?

We are an advisory team of specialist palliative care nurses, palliative medicine consultants, resident doctors and administrative staff. We work alongside the doctors and nurses who are treating you. We provide an additional layer of support and expertise.

We work with other services such as chaplaincy, dieticians, occupational and physiotherapy to advise on care while you are in hospital. We can also work with the discharge team to support plans for what happens when you are discharged.

How can we help you?

Our team provide expert advice on managing pain and other symptoms, such as sickness and breathlessness. We provide emotional support and give advice on practical problems. We support discussions about your treatment and care.

We can help you make an **advance care plan** for the future, such as where you would like to be cared for when you leave hospital. You can share how you would like to be cared for if you become very unwell, so that people caring for you know your wishes and needs.

How can you be referred?

Referrals to our hospital specialist palliative care team can be made by anyone in your treating team. It is important that you agree to the referral and that your consultant knows about it. If you would like to be referred but have not been, please discuss this with the doctors and nurses looking after you.

When you are referred to our team, you will be given a **named keyworker** who will be your first point of contact. If your keyworker is not available, another member of the team will offer support and advice.

What about palliative care when you leave hospital?

Our hospital team has close links with local community palliative care services and hospices. If needed, we can refer you to these services when you leave the hospital. They will also accept referrals from your treating team or your GP.

Hospices specialise in caring for people close to the end of life. You can go to a hospice for different reasons. For example you may go there for a short time to get your symptoms under control, or you may prefer to die in a hospice. There is a limited number of beds in each hospice, so there may be a waiting list.

Community palliative care teams are often linked to a hospice. Members of the team can visit you at home or in a care home to offer advice and support. They offer a number of different support services. If you have any questions about these services, please speak to our team.

How to contact us?

If you wish to contact the team, please email us directly: imperial.palliative-care@nhs.net or phone the hospital switchboard and ask for the Specialist Palliative Care Team:

- Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1234
- Hammersmith Hospital – 020 3313 1000
- St Mary's Hospital – 020 3312 6666

Our team is available **Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays)**. We will try to answer you as soon as possible during these hours. However, if your concern is urgent please speak to the doctors and nurses looking after you.

Additional information and support

Chaplaincy Team

During times of illness many people draw on faith traditions, others want a listening ear. Our hospital multi-faith chaplaincy team offer prayer, advice and pastoral support to all patients and visitors. You do not have to be a member of a religious group to talk to a chaplain. They are available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. If needed outside of these hours, ward staff can contact a chaplain to request an urgent visit. You can also call the chaplains on 0203312 1508, or email imperial.chaplains@nhs.net

Interpreting services

Discussions and decisions about palliative care can be difficult, especially if English is not your first language. If you need a foreign language or British Sign Language interpreter please let us know and we will arrange this.

This leaflet can also be provided on request in large print or as a sound recording, in Braille or in other languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.communications@nhs.net

Feedback

We would like your feedback on the care the Specialist Palliative Care Team has given you or your loved one. Please complete the Friends & Family survey using the QR Code or link below. Your anonymous feedback will help us to continue to improve our NHS service and detailed comments will help us to know where we can improve.



www.oc-meridian.com/OCQ/u/imp652

Please ensure you select **Specialist Palliative Care Team** and the correct hospital site from the drop down menu.
Thank you

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