

How to recognise that the person is close to finishing up



If you think the person you are caring for is close to finishing up, your doctor or health worker will be able to help you. It is ok to ask them if they think your family member is close to finishing up.



There are some common signs that someone is close to finishing up

- They are spending long times in bed.
- Moving is difficult.
- Trouble swallowing foods.
- Sleeping for long periods.
- Not talking very much.
- Confusion.
- Restless (unable to remain at ease).
- Unable to tell you when they need to go to the bathroom.
- Changes in breathing.

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How will we know when the person has finished up?

The person has passed when:

- Breathing has stopped.
- You cannot wake the person.
- There is no heart beat or pulse.
- The eyes may be fixed open and are not moving.

The person may now look different to you. They may appear pale and their hands and feet may be cold – this is due to the blood no longer circulating. The jaw may drop as the muscles have relaxed. There may also be passing of urine (pee) and faeces (poo). Some air may escape from the lungs if you move the person who has passed.

If you think they have passed away, call the doctor or health worker who will come to confirm the person you are caring for has finished up. Read our 'After the death' factsheet for more information on what to do next.



Here for You (May 2022) by
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