



When the person is close to finishing up, there will be things the family will need to do to help keep the person comfortable. Things that may help are listed.



Create a comfortable space

- Have space or chairs for family to visit.
- A single bed or even a hospital bed may be useful.
- Your family may have their own traditional practices and rituals to do during this time.
- Consider music, soft lighting, an open window, and gentle touch as ways to show your love to the person.

Changes to personal care

- Swallowing may be difficult at this time. They will probably not want to eat or drink at this stage, which is normal. Do not force them to eat or drink.
- Offering small sips of water will help keep the persons mouth moist. Mouth swabs do help.

- A lip balm is good for keeping the lips moist.
- There is no need for showering and washing every day.
- It is common for the amount of urine (pee) to decrease over time as the person is not drinking very much.
- Absorbent pads or adult nappies may be helpful.

Changes to medicines

- Some medicines will be stopped at this time and other medicines may be given in other ways - the doctor or health worker will let you know.
- Sometimes the doctor or health worker will ask you to get some additional medicine from the Pharmacy to keep at the house – this is so you will have immediate access to it should it be needed.

Common symptoms

- Pain – The person may not be able to tell you if they are in pain so you may need to watch them and see if they look uncomfortable. A person who is in pain may make a facial grimace or frown, they may grunt or groan or whimper, they may appear agitated and shift position. Give medicines, following

the instructions on the label, and let the doctor or health worker know if the person continues to seem uncomfortable. Giving medicines as directed for pain will not cause or hasten death but ensure the death if peaceful.

- Noisy breathing - If the person's breathing changes such as becoming noisy, there are medicines available to help lessen the noise. Opening a window or putting on a fan may also help.
- Restlessness - Changing positions may help if they become restless. Using pillows to help position and support a person remain on their side can be helpful and then swapping sides every few hours.
- Confusion - Playing familiar music might help if they begin to call out or groan. Medicines are available and can be used if they become confused or distressed.
- As they become closer to finishing up the person may experience times where they lapse in and out of consciousness. You can still talk to them to let them know you are there.

It is important that you feel supported by family and by your doctor or health worker at this time and can call for assistance at any time.

Here for You (May 2022) by
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