

What is palliative care?

When you have a serious illness, such as heart failure, you may suffer from physical discomfort such as shortness of breath, pain or nausea.

You may also have feelings of psychological distress, such as anxiety or depression. Your healthcare providers will provide medical therapies to treat or manage your condition, for example, water tablets or blood pressure medications.

However you may also need to receive care that is focused on improving your quality of life while you are ill. This type of care is called **'comfort'** or **palliative care**.

Useful contact details

Heart Failure Nurse Specialist (Mater Hospital, Monday-Friday 07:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.): ring 01 803 4765 or 803 4745 (direct lines) or 01 8032000 and ask for bleep 3244 or 3468

Coronary Care Unit (Mater Hospital, Out of hours and weekends) ring 01 8034700 or 803 4705

Palliative Care Nurse Specialist (Mater Hospital, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.): ring 01 8032000 and ask for bleep 3453, 3454 or 2817

More information about heart failure and palliative care services may be found on the Mater website at www.mater.ie

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Heart Failure and Palliative Care



Information Leaflet

What can palliative care do for me and my family?

A focus on palliative care can help to:

- Provide relief from pain and other distressing symptoms,
- Provide you and your loved ones with emotional and psychological support and guidance,
- Plan for the future, including making plans for living as well as possible, based on your needs, concerns and goals for care.

Who provides palliative care?

Your **cardiology team** and your **general practitioner** can provide palliative care in most circumstances.

If more intensive palliative care is needed, your doctor can refer you to the **Specialist Palliative Care team** for extra support.

The Specialist Palliative Care team is based here in the hospital and works in partnership with your usual doctors to provide the care that you need.

In the community your general practitioner may access Specialist Palliative Care by contacting your local hospice.

When should I receive palliative care?

Many people mistakenly believe that you can only receive palliative care when other treatments are no longer possible. Actually, palliative care can be provided to people of any age and at any stage of their illness. It can also be provided in a variety of locations - in the hospital, at home, or sometimes in a hospice.

You and your healthcare team are the best people to know when is the right time to introduce palliative care into your care plan - if this hasn't been discussed but you would like to do so, then don't hesitate to raise the subject with the cardiology team or your GP.