What's the Difference Between Hospice Care and Palliative Care?

Hospice care and palliative care have things in common, but they're not the same:

- **Palliative care**
  - A form of specialized care to help people with serious illnesses and their families live as well and as comfortably as they can.
  - Focuses on managing or reducing pain and other symptoms and offers other interventions aimed at improving quality of life.
  - Can be used alongside medical treatments meant to cure the illness, and can help patients understand their treatment options and make choices about treatment that are aligned with their goals and values.
  - Can be helpful at any stage of serious illness.
  - Does not have a set length of care and depends on what you need and what insurance will cover (if you have insurance).

- **Hospice care**
  - A subset of palliative care that is for people with serious illness who doctors believe have 6 months or less to live.
  - Hospice care can be given in a:
    - Patient’s home
    - Hospice center
    - Nursing home
    - Hospital (uncommonly)

Palliative care can be given in a:

- Hospital
- Specialized outpatient clinic
- Nursing home
- Patient’s home

Who makes up a palliative care team?

- Palliative care doctors
- Palliative care nurses
- Social workers
- Spiritual advisors or chaplains

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- Hospice center
- Nursing home
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Who makes up a hospice care team?

- Hospice nurses
- Hospice doctors
- Spiritual advisors or chaplains
- Social workers
- Volunteers trained to support patients and their families

Palliative only
- For people with serious illness
- Help manage symptoms and make decisions that align with their goals
- Can be covered by Medicare or other insurance

Hospice only
- For people with terminal illness
- Care is focused on comfort and end-of-life needs
- Can be covered by Medicare or other insurance

Both
- For people with serious illness
- Offer physical and emotional support to patients and families

To find hospice and palliative care near you, visit the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Did you know? Hospice doesn’t mean stopping all treatments — just the ones (like chemotherapy for cancer) meant to cure an illness.

Team members work together to provide whole-person care, in collaboration with the patient’s other healthcare providers.

1. Palliative care doctors
2. Palliative care nurses
3. Social workers
4. Spiritual advisors or chaplains

1. Hospice nurses
2. Hospice doctors
3. Spiritual advisors or chaplains
4. Social workers
5. Volunteers trained to support patients and their families

For more information, visit the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.