

PALLIATIVE CARE

COPING AT HOME AFTER BUSINESS HOURS

WHAT THE AFTER HOURS SERVICE CAN AND CANNOT DO.

THE AFTER HOURS PALLIATIVE CARE PHONE SERVICE CAN:

- Assess your problems from a nursing perspective
- Provide advice, education and support
- Advise you how to manage symptoms using your medications and other techniques
- Guide you through administering medications over the phone
- Liaise with doctors or a Barwon Health nurse over the phone
- Arrange a Barwon Health nurse to visit you to provide an urgent assessment, support or administer medications
- Advise you when you need to see a doctor urgently or if this can wait until the next day
- Advise you what to do in an emergency, or where death is imminent
- Advise what to do or organise a Barwon Health nurse to visit where death has occurred
- Provide information about business hours services
- Direct you to good quality Australian or Victorian websites and helplines
- Just listen to you and be there.

THE AFTER HOURS PALLIATIVE CARE PHONE SERVICE CANNOT:

- Make a medical diagnosis or prognosis
- Advise you to use medication or doses not prescribed by your doctors
- Arrange a nurse to visit you if the situation is not urgent or where medications are not available in the home for them to use.
- Arrange a nurse to visit if there is no nurse available in remote locations, or if there is a risk to the visiting nurse.
- Arrange a hospice or hospital bed if one is not available at the time
- Ring an ambulance for you
- Be expected to have all the most up to date information about you
- Go against your wishes (unless you are asking for a nurse to visit where one is not available or this has been deemed unsuitable.)

DURING THE DAY: PREPARATION

1	Be involved in care planning.	Ask the Barwon Health community palliative care service to provide you with a written plan based on your symptoms to use when problems arise. Also ask about "Advance Care Planning" (www.respectingchoices.org.au).
2	Keep up to date with your medications.	Ask questions about your medications, especially new ones and make sure you know what they are for and how to use them. Fill all your prescriptions and store at home, even if you feel well. Most medications last a long time but you should discard medication you no longer use. You may be unable to get specific medications from your pharmacy and you should let your doctor or nurse know if this is the case.
3	Communicate regularly with the Barwon Health team.	Call the community palliative care service during business hours (Mon-Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm) to change appointments, source equipment or ask non urgent questions about your care. Let a doctor or nurse know if you or your carer are having problems with home care, psychological or physical symptoms early to avoid a more serious situation later.
4	Ask for education and support and seek out further information at www.pallcarevic.asn.au.	Ask to be trained how to manage symptoms using alternate therapies e.g. relaxation and breathing techniques. Ask about the local services available to help you e.g. respite, support groups, allied health and volunteers.

AFTER BUSINESS HOURS (BETWEEN 4.30PM AND 8.30AM): THE BARWON HEALTH AFTER HOURS PHONE NUMBER IS (03) 4215 5700.

- **Do Call: A simple call could provide relief and rest overnight or over the weekend.**
- **Calling us before contacting "000" may save you the trouble of a hospital visit.**
- **Don't hesitate to call. We are ready to help patients and their carers 24/7.**
- **Calling can ease your worries about making choices alone.**

1	Use your regular medications as prescribed prior to calling, includes any extra doses, for symptoms such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain • Nausea, vomiting or constipation • Breathlessness • Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
2	Talking to someone over the phone and following instructions can be very hard when under stress.	It may be helpful to have a family member or neighbour on hand, especially in emergencies. They can phone for you or help carry out instructions.
3	Have all your information with you before phoning.	This includes having your home folder and current medications with you. The nurse you speak to will have access to the information about you in the Barwon Health palliative care client database.
4	Try to remain calm and be patient during the call; this way the nurse can help you sooner.	Speak slowly and clearly. Spell you name to the paging service operator. Call back in 10 minutes if a nurse doesn't respond. Give the nurse time to properly assess your problems and suggest a plan.
5	The nurse you speak to will be based at Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew, Melbourne.	The hospice nurses are very experienced in palliative care. In most cases they will be able to help you over the phone. They will pass on the details of your call to the community palliative care service. You should receive a follow up call the next business day.
6	The nurse you speak to will advise the best plan.	You may be advised how to manage using your medications and other techniques. If a Barwon Health nurse is to visit, you will be given an approximate time. If the nurse thinks you need urgent medical attention they will arrange a medical review or a trip to hospital.
7	Listen to the advice given carefully. Follow all instructions during and after the call. Call back if you need to.	Don't hang up until you know exactly what to do. Repeat the plan back to the nurse to double check. Phone back if you need more advice or to go over anything previously discussed. *This is a pager service.