

Comfort Measures Only

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Comfort Measures Only refers to medical treatment of a dying person where the natural dying process is permitted to occur while assuring maximum comfort. Your physician may write an order for **Comfort Measures Only** after talking with you about your goals of care. This assures that further treatments and interventions are in alignment with your wishes.

Members of the health care team strive to meet your goals and expectations for comfort by addressing your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, as well as the needs of your family and friends who gather to support you. Effective symptom relief as well as ongoing support and guidance for you and others during the last weeks to hours of life is paramount.

Comfort Measures Only May Include

- ✓ Focusing on the dying and their loved ones, eliminating sources of discomfort
- ✓ Providing effective pain and symptom management through the use of medications and other therapies
- ✓ Offering a quiet, private environment that supports the intimate process of dying
- ✓ Encouraging personal rituals that may honor or celebrate the person dying
- ✓ Providing support, reassurance, and information about grief, bereavement, and information and guidance about the dying process
- ✓ Providing spiritual care as desired
- ✓ Offering food and fluids as the dying person desires and is able to take
- ✓ Preventing constipation, even if oral intake has been minimal
- ✓ Positioning at frequent intervals to prevent bedsores
- ✓ Offering frequent mouth care for discomfort from drying (as tolerated)
- ✓ Instilling artificial tears or eye lubricant for discomfort from drying
- ✓ Limiting vital signs to respirations (breathing) and temperature (this practice may vary)
- ✓ Stopping medications that are not essential to promoting comfort, including antibiotics
- ✓ Stopping needle sticks and blood draws, including finger sticks for blood sugar
- ✓ Removing nonessential equipment that may distract care providers and loved ones from focusing on the one who is dying, including cardiac monitors, blood pressure cuffs, pulse-oximeter probes, compression stockings feeding tubes and tube feedings, IV access devices, Foley catheters, wound vacs, oxygen and more, depending on the goals of care.

Comfort Measures Only is Appropriate When

- ✓ Cure or prolongation of life are no longer reachable goals.
- ✓ Comfort is your priority.
- ✓ The expected quality of the rest of your life is at a level that is not acceptable to you.
- ✓ Your Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care indicates comfort is a priority in this situation.

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