



**HUMMINGBIRD  
HOSPICE**  
BECAUSE EVERY MOMENT MATTERS

## Hospice Care for Heart Disease Patients

Patients who suffer from congestive heart failure have usually lived with the condition for a long time before they get to the point where they would consider hospice. Just because you or your loved one is no longer able to receive treatment that would significantly lengthen life, that doesn't mean there aren't things that can be done to increase quality of life and overall comfort. This is where hospice comes in.



### **When to Inquire About Hospice**

Deciding to ask about hospice is not easy, since setting up that kind of care entails admitting that you or someone you love is in the final months of life. With congestive heart failure, it can be very difficult to tell when that point has arrived. Patients sometimes live with frustrating symptoms for years or even decades, and it's not always obvious that these symptoms have worsened. An evaluation from a doctor will guide you in this matter. However, it is never too early to get some general information about hospice. Checking into the options will help you feel more comfortable later.

### **Watching for Signs of Worsening Symptoms**

Be vigilant when it comes to monitoring symptoms. There are several signs to watch out for; if you notice any of them, it might be time for a discussion with the doctor. Are bouts of angina – chest discomfort due to insufficient blood flow – a common occurrence? Has the disease's advanced stage led to frequent tiredness and shortness of breath? These are both strong indicators that the condition may be approaching terminal status, especially if there has already been significant treatment and the doctor has determined that no further treatment would be advised or helpful. Some people also have additional treatment options, such as major heart surgery, but choose not to pursue them. If you are deliberately turning down potentially life-extending treatment, it is probably time to talk about hospice.



## How Hospice can Help Patients and Families

There are many ways that a hospice program can help patients and their families. The compassionate professionals who work with hospice are dedicated to providing the best care, and they constantly evaluate to determine what that might be. The primary goal is relieving physical pain and emotional distress.

For heart patient's, chief concerns include dealing with chest pains, shortness of breath, weakness and excessive tiredness, hypertension and a general decline in being able to perform normal, everyday functions. In addition to caring directly for these symptoms and managing them, the hospice team will communicate regularly with the cardiologist and bring in any necessary medical equipment, as well as administering prescriptions and oxygen as needed. The team will stay on top of symptoms in order to dramatically lessen the possibility of your needing to go to the hospital.

## Benefits of Hummingbird Hospice

One of the nicest things about Hummingbird Hospice is that we allow patients to remain in the comfort and familiarity of their own homes or long-term facilities such as nursing homes. Our highly trained care team has a deep sense of empathy and concern for patients, as well as the medical knowledge required to administer care in a professional and efficient manner. Hummingbird Hospice coordinates with all of the patient's doctors, pharmacists and other medical professionals in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to care.

In addition to the caring health professionals, there are counselors and chaplains who are specially equipped to handle a patient's inner distress. These individuals can provide comfort and help them to face their impending passing with a sense of peace.

## Benefits for Families and Loved Ones

Care and comfort of the family is an important consideration when thinking of hospice. Our care team is equipped to serve the family in a variety of ways, easing their burden and offering information on how to face the challenges that lie ahead. These challenges often include becoming primary caregivers, taking over financial responsibility, and becoming emotionally distressed at the prospect of losing a loved one.

Hummingbird Hospice can help in all these respects and more. Members of the care team will provide ample education to family members about how to undertake caregiving duties. For those with no training in the medical field, the prospect of taking care of a sick loved one can be very intimidating. We are committed to providing all the education that is needed to empower caregivers.

*Choosing hospice care doesn't mean that you've given up hope. Instead, hospice care means you're changing what you hope for.*

