



# Hospice Care for Dementia and Alzheimer's Patients

## Support for Patients with Dementia or Alzheimer's

As dementia progresses, a common problem that occurs is the patients lose the ability to tell others what they need. Our individualized and comprehensive care anticipates and adjusts to this inability. We make provision for effective pain management, nutritious meals, adequate hydration, and appropriate skin care. We also take measures to avoid and to treat infections, and to prevent or to calm the patient's agitation.



## Does Your Family Need Hospice Support?

Are you or a loved one confronted with a terminal illness such as dementia, or Alzheimer's disease, a form of dementia? If this illness is a part of your family now, you will probably need hospice because it serves those who are in the end stages of dementia. As mentioned, hospice is designed to improve the quality of the remaining life for the patient and the patient's family by relieving pain, controlling symptoms, and reducing everyone's anxiety and worry.

## Dementia / Alzheimer's Checklist

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are personal experiences. No one knows how long a particular stage or symptom will last, so it can be hard to determine when it is time for hospice care. When a patient is admitted to hospice care, life expectancy at that point is six months or less. That determination is for a doctor to make, but there are signs that the disease has progressed to the level of hospice care:

- The potential patient is unable to say more than a few words.
- The person no longer walks and may be bed-bound.
- Complete dependence on others to perform their activities of daily living, such as dressing, grooming, and feeding themselves.
- The potential patient seems very anxious.



## What Happens Next?

If your loved one has the symptoms mentioned, you can request a hospice evaluation. The assessment is done by a registered nurse or physician to determine, among other things, the person's need for:

- Pain management
- Symptom management
- Counseling regarding hospice or other care options

Your physician may also make this request although you do not need to wait for a doctor referral. You can call our care representative at 210-908-9774 to find out how Hummingbird Hospice can help you.

## Approaching Your Family about Hospice Care

If you are showing symptoms of dementia and want to plan for your future, letting your loved ones know can help formulate your plan. This can be a difficult conversation to have, but the final months are very emotional and filled with tough decisions. Now may be the best time to talk about it.

First, you may want to educate yourself by researching the topic of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and hospice care. It would be useful to learn some of the common misconceptions about end-of-life care. This knowledge will help you to answer any questions your family may have about hospice.

## Gathering Information

Before talking to your family, find out what they know about your health, and clarify anything that they misunderstood or didn't fully understand. If your loved ones are not emotionally prepared to hear the truth about your prognosis, perhaps you could have your physician, clergy, or close friend of the family talk to them too.

## Hospice Means Support

Hospice is available to you or your loved one wherever "home" is – nursing home, assisted living facility, family home, even a hospital. Hummingbird Hospice is offers 24-hour service to meet your unique physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. Hospice care is not about how you or your loved one dies, but rather how you and your loved one lives, right up to those last precious moments.

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

