

End of Life Care (EoLC)

EoLC or the terminal phase refers to the last days of life, when the person is actively dying (Palliative Care Expert Group, 2018).

During this time the person:

- Requires increased bed rest and may become bed-bound and require extensive nursing care by professionals and/or family
- Is poorly responsive or unconscious with limited response to verbal or physical stimuli, e.g. no longer responding to voices
- No longer wishes to eat and/or have difficulty swallowing
- No longer needs fluids – some thirst is common and mouth care can alleviate this symptom as a dry mouth is different to dehydration at End of Life
- Has reduced or no urine output and may be incontinent – urine will be dark and concentrated due to kidneys losing function
- Undergoes changes in their breathing pattern due to decreased function of muscles required for breathing and throat clearance
- Shows signs of peripheral shutdown, eg pale or mottled skin, cold hands and feet (in the last hours of life).
- Often experience changes in their thought processes e.g. confusion, delirium, hallucinations
- May require pain relief – which can be administered in a variety of ways – this neither hastens nor postpones the dying process.
- Requires constant support that is culturally safe
- Requires family support – they need to understand what is happening to the person they love
- **Has intact hearing It is okay to tell them everything that is happening and you miss them, love them and will always remember them.**

Please contact your support people if you have any questions as this is a difficult time in which there is no one way to react/respond to.

PEPA Program of
Experience in the
Palliative Approach
Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health

CareSearch. (2017). Symptom Management at End of Life. Accessed April 2019 at

<https://www.caresearch.com.au/caresearch/tabid/741/Default.aspx>

Palliative Care Australia. (2017). Accessed April 2019 <https://palliativecare.org.au/>

Palliative Care Expert Group. (2016). *Therapeutic Guidelines; palliative care* (4th ed.). Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines Limited.