



A Gynecologic Cancer fact sheet

palliative care:

your guide



A cancer diagnosis can impact you in many ways beyond the actual staging and treatment of the disease. As you schedule appointments with your gynecologic oncologist, you might have questions about various topics related to your health. The Your Guide series, available on the Foundation for Women's Cancer website, is meant to be a patient resource that you can discuss with your health care provider. This fact sheet provides a description of palliative care and lists resources where you can find additional information about providers.

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care (also known as supportive care, symptom management, or comfort care) is care given to improve the quality of life of patients who have a serious or life-threatening disease, such as cancer. The goal of palliative care is to prevent or treat as early as possible the symptoms of cancer, as well as treat the side effects caused by life-prolonging treatments of cancer. Palliative care also addresses psychological, social and spiritual problems related to cancer or its treatment, thus providing patients with whole-person care, not just care of their cancer.

Your cancer treating physician may introduce you to a palliative care team at the start of your active treatment. A palliative care team may consist of board-certified physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists and others. Having this team involved in the start of your care will improve your quality of life and whole-person care.

What is Hospice Care?

A subtype of palliative care is **hospice care**, which utilizes the same specialty team and provides whole-person care at the end of life. Hospice care is usually offered when life expectancy is six months or less. Hospice care can be provided in the patient's home or in a specialized facility. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (CaringInfo.org) has developed a worksheet with questions to help patients and their family members identify factors that may be important to them when selecting a hospice.

Additional resources to learn more about palliative care or find a provider:

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization - nhpco.org

Find a Care Provider - nhpco.org/find-a-care-provider

American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine - palliativedoctors.org

Center for Advanced Palliative Care - getpalliativecare.org

Palliative Care Provider Directory - getpalliativecare.org/provider-directory



Society of Gynecologic Oncology

The Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting research, education and public awareness of gynecologic cancers.

foundationforwomenscancer.org

The FWC is the official foundation of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology.