



Contact Us

2626 East 17th Street, Columbus, IN 47201

PHONE: 812-314-8083

WEB: www.ourhospice.org

EMAIL: ourhospice@crh.org



Healthcare Decisions

Have loved ones start discussions early when deciding legal and financial matters.

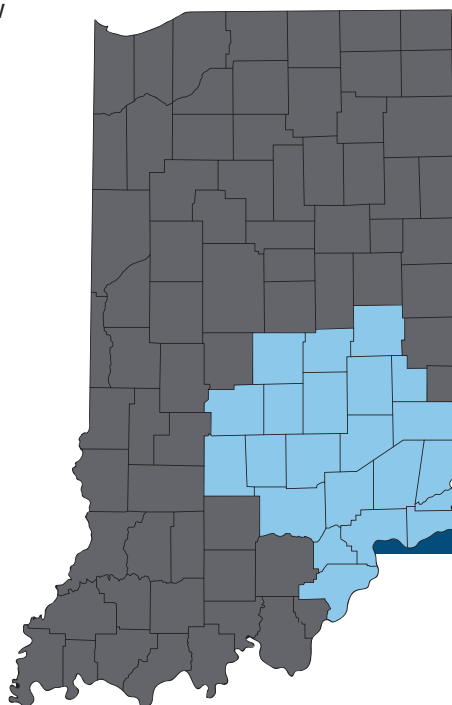
Patient should have the right to make informed decisions as long as they are able.

Encourage family to discuss options for care, should the patient need it later, such as in-home care, long term care, even funeral and burial arrangements.



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Caring for people in 22 counties from offices in Columbus, Greensburg, and North Vernon



Dementia: Helpful Tips

ourhospice.org

A Guide for Clinical Staff,
Family and Caregivers



Helpful Tips

- Check environment, make sure it is safe and calm for patient.
- Speak to patient in soft, controlled voice, lowering yourself to eye contact level.
- Call patient by preferred name, offer reassurance when needed.
- Ask if they are in pain, discomfort, hungry, scared, need to use the restroom.
- When was the last time they had a bowel movement, possible constipation.
- Keep staff to a minimum while patient is upset, angry or lashing out.
- If you know of a family member, care giver, or friend the patient would like to call and talk to, call them.
- Offer a drink, to take a walk, do a hobby they like, offer something to hold on to such as small pillow, stuffed animal, baby doll.
- Offer some time alone and limit distractions, quiet the surroundings, try a back rub.
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication and respect their personal space.
- Avoid arguing or criticizing, be respectful.
- Try singing with patient, play their favorite music (country, gospel, rock).

Helpful Tips continued...

- Read something to them (mail, magazine, bible or book).
- Keep well-loved objects and photographs around to help patient feel more secure.
- Remind patient who you are if they don't remember. It may take multiple times doing this throughout the interaction. However, try not to ask, "Don't you know who I am?", or "Can't you remember?"
- Encourage a two-way conversation for as long as possible, allowing enough time for patient to communicate what they are needing.

Safety Concerns

Change diet as needed if patient is having difficulty swallowing or drinking.

Make sure to clear away unused items and remove small rugs, electrical cords and anything that a patient might trip over.

If stairs are being used, please make sure there is at least one handrail. Use safety grip strips if possible or mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape so they are easier to see. Use grab rails, locked doors, and/or safety alarms if needed.

Cover unused electrical outlets with safety plugs. If needed, may try safety latches on cabinet doors that have cleaning products and dangerous items.

Use good lighting and natural light when able.

If possible, remove curtains and rugs with busy patterns that could cause an increase in confusion.

Dementia: General Tips for Care

Keep a routine as much as possible with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating at the same time daily.

Assist patient to write down to-do lists, appointments and any events on a calendar.

Try to come up with a system for reminders to help patients who must take medications regularly (a phone call, taped up note, pill organizers - regular or ones with alarms).

Plan activities that the patient likes to do and try to do these at the same time every day (read a book, work in garden, watch a favorite show, listen to music, knitting, bird watching, etc.).

Always allow the patient to be as independent as possible when able, such as picking out what to wear, deciding what to eat or drink, washing themselves (even a little helps them be more confident).

Involve them in activities as they are able, such as household chores, cooking, baking, bringing in the paper, gardening.

Make sure clothes are loose fitting and comfortable; nothing too tight or hard to get on and off. Use clothing with elastic waistbands and large zipper pulls. Use shoes that are slip on or have Velcro straps instead of shoelaces. Avoid buttons and buckles.

Serve meals in a consistent and familiar place and time, allowing patient enough time to eat while taking breaks if needed.

Always explain what you are going to do next, step by step so they understand what is being done. This is especially true during bathing and while getting dressed.

Exercise is very helpful in many ways, walk together every day if appropriate, this helps with daily functions and helps to improve mood, rest when needed.