

BEGIN AGAIN LIVING MINISTRIES

Signs a Loved One May Be Approaching the Final Days

Common changes and when to contact the hospice team

A COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE FOR HOSPICE FAMILIES

Compassionate guidance for caregiving, grief, and end-of-life transitions.

From Diagnosis to Goodbye™

Signs a Loved One May Be Approaching the Final Days

Every person's dying process is different. Some changes may occur gradually, suddenly, or not at all. The hospice team should interpret changes in the context of the person's illness and plan of care.

Use this guide as a starting point for conversation. Individual needs and care plans may differ.

1. More sleep and less interaction

The person may sleep longer, speak less, or be harder to awaken. Continue gentle presence and speak respectfully even when responses are limited.

2. Reduced food and fluid intake

Interest in eating and drinking often decreases. Ask the hospice team about mouth care, safe comfort measures, and how to respond without forcing intake.

3. Changes in breathing

Breathing may become irregular, shallow, faster, slower, or include pauses and noisy secretions. Call hospice for guidance and symptom assessment.

Practical Guidance

1. Circulation and temperature changes

Hands and feet may become cool, and skin color may change or appear mottled. The team can explain comfort measures and what these changes may mean.

2. Confusion or restlessness

The person may seem disoriented, reach into the air, speak to unseen people, or become restless. Report new or distressing behavior so reversible causes and comfort needs can be assessed.

3. Less urine and increasing weakness

Urine output may decrease and mobility may become unsafe. Ask for help with repositioning, toileting, fall prevention, equipment, and caregiver techniques.

My Next Steps

- ☐ Keep the hospice number nearby and call with any concerning change.
- ☐ Do not change medications without hospice or prescriber guidance.
- ☐ Focus on comfort, mouth care, gentle touch, and calm surroundings.
- ☐ Ask the team what signs require an urgent call.
- ☐ Call hospice at the time of death instead of emergency services unless instructed otherwise.

You do not have to carry this journey alone. Support is available, and asking for help is an act of care.

About Begin Again Living Ministries

Begin Again Living Ministries offers compassionate education and support for individuals, families, caregivers, churches, and organizations navigating grief, caregiving, stress, and end-of-life transitions.

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