

When to Call the Hospice Nurse

What is happening

During hospice care, new symptoms and changes can occur unexpectedly.

The hospice team wants caregivers to call with concerns early rather than waiting until problems become severe.

You are not expected to manage difficult situations alone.

Call the hospice nurse if any of the following occur

Pain or comfort concerns

- Increasing or uncontrolled pain
- New or unexplained abdominal pain
- Medications are not helping symptoms

Breathing or neurologic changes

- New difficulty speaking or moving
- New vision problems
- Severe headache
- Seizures

Bowel or urinary concerns

- No bowel movement for more than 2 days
- No urination for more than 8 hours

Emotional or behavioral changes

- Increasing anxiety or depression
- Unable to sleep despite medications

Falls or injuries

- Any fall with concern for injury

Bleeding

- Unexpected or significant bleeding

Appetite or medication concerns

- Sudden major change in appetite
- Questions about medications
- Difficulty giving medications safely

General rule

Call the hospice team anytime:

- Something seems significantly different
- You feel unsure what to do
- The patient appears uncomfortable or distressed
- You are worried about safety or comfort