Pain Management and Comfort Measures

As the end-of-life approaches, you and your doctor may discuss pain management options, to make sure you're as comfortable as possible.

There are many different types of medicines available for pain management and comfort at the end of life. You may already take non-prescription, over-the-counter medicines like aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen. Your doctor may suggest these to you for mild pain.

When you need stronger pain management

If over-the-counter medicines aren't working, talk to your doctor. They'll want to know more about your pain like:

- What causes it?
- How much does it hurt?
- Where does it hurt?
- Does it come and go?

Your answers will help your doctor figure out what kind of medicine is right for you, and how much you need.

Options for pain control

Pain medications come in many forms and a variety of strengths. Your healthcare provider will usually suggest a pill, capsule, or liquid. If those don't control your pain, or you have trouble swallowing, you can try a patch or a pump.

Many people worry about addiction. But you shouldn't deny yourself the medicine you need to control pain.

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Alternative methods for pain management

Medicines are very useful for controlling pain, but there are other methods to consider, too. You may want to ask your healthcare provider if some of these comfort measures might be right for you:

- Meditation
- Relaxation
- Imagery
- Hypnosis
- Support groups
- Pastoral and spiritual support

Take comfort from others

Many people look to friends, family members, and spiritual advisors for comfort at this stage of life. Others don't want to spend time with too many visitors. Feel free to let your loved ones know what you want.

Take comfort from knowing you're prepared

Creating an [Advance Directive](#) can give you peace of mind. It outlines your end-of-life wishes in great detail. That means your family won't have to guess about your wishes, should you be unable to speak for yourself.

For more in-depth information on this topic, please visit the [Big Fat Reference Guide (BFRG)](#). If you are enrolled in AlphaNet's Subscriber Portal, you can access the BFRG [here](#).