

The Palliative Approach for *Advanced Frailty* in Long Term Care



A RESOURCE FOR RESIDENTS,
FAMILY AND FRIENDS

What is a Palliative Approach?

This pamphlet was made to help persons with **Advanced Frailty** and their families know what to expect at the end of life so they can plan ahead. Talking about preferences early on is an important first step to **a Palliative Approach to Care**.

A PALLIATIVE APPROACH:

- Is for residents in long term care (LTC) with conditions that have no cure
- Shifts focus from prolonging life to maintaining quality of life
- Is an active approach that can start at any stage of chronic illness
- Is part of usual care
- Does not require a referral





A PALLIATIVE APPROACH INCLUDES:

- Treatment of curable conditions
- Pain and symptom management
- Social and spiritual support

For more information, please visit:

www.virtualhospice.ca
www.advancecareplanning.ca

What is Frailty?

Frailty is a chronic **progressive life-limiting illness**. This means that symptoms worsen over time and may affect how long one lives.

FRAILTY IS:

- An age-related decline in health
- Linked to cognitive problems and having multiple chronic conditions (e.g. dementia, heart disease, cancer)

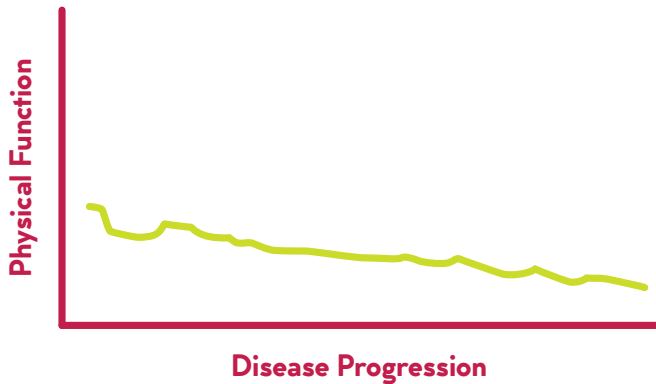
FRAIL RESIDENTS:

- Are at higher risk for falls, hospital admission, disability and death
- Have problems with multiple body systems



How Does Frailty Progress?

It is difficult to predict how long frail persons will live, so it is good to hope for the best and plan for the worst.



Living with Frailty

The progression of frailty cannot be reversed and there is no cure. Being well-informed will help you to make care decisions if you are able.

FRAIL RESIDENTS MAY SHOW A DECLINE IN:

- Muscle mass and strength (weakness)
- Energy (fatigue)
- Walking speed or mobility
- Activity levels (lies in bed or sits in a chair for most of the day)
- Ability to do daily activities (e.g. eating, toileting, bathing, walking)
- Appetite (weight loss)
- Cognitive function

THE END STAGE OF FRAILTY IS CALLED "FAILURE TO THRIVE". IT MAY BE RELATED TO ONE OR MORE DISEASES.



Tips for Family & Friends

BEFORE A CARE DECISION IS MADE:

- Consider your relative or friend's end of life values and preferences
- Stay informed and ask questions
- Encourage your relative or friend to be as independent and participate in as many decisions as he or she is able

WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, EXPLORE AND DISCUSS OPTIONS:

- To prevent or reduce injury from falling
- To prevent or reduce confusion (e.g. discontinue unnecessary medications)
- To manage symptoms from multiple chronic conditions
- For diet (e.g. supplements to deal with swallowing problems or weight loss)
- For dealing with fatigue (e.g. promote physical activity)



Your health is important too. If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek support from your health care provider.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK ABOUT?

- What are my or my relative or friend's biggest fears about my/his/her health?
- How can I help maintain my or my relative or friend's quality of life?
- What should I expect when I am or my relative or friend is dying?

Online Resources

1. Canadian Frailty Network
<https://www.cfn-nce.ca>
2. See SPA-LTC website for more resources
www.spaltc.ca/resource-library/

Contact Us

Dr. Paulette Hunter
phunter@stmcollege.ca

Dr. Abigail Wickson-Griffiths
abigail.wickson-griffiths@uregina.ca

