

# SPA-LTC

Strengthening a Palliative Approach  
in Long-Term Care



*Many Canadians misunderstand how the palliative approach works. These are 5 common myths about the palliative approach, debunked:*

**FACT:** The term 'palliative approach' is often confused with 'palliative care' or 'end-of-life' care. What makes a palliative approach different is that it could begin as soon as someone is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. The focus of this approach is to improve quality of life by using a holistic care model that includes psychological, social and spiritual care.

## MYTH #1

A palliative approach is the same as palliative care or end-of-life care.

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## Q & A:

### WHAT IS THE PALLIATIVE APPROACH?

A palliative approach focuses on living well and comfortably at any stage of a life-shortening illness. It is holistic care that emphasizes improving quality of life for both the person receiving care and their families.

### WHY IS A PALLIATIVE APPROACH AN IMPORTANT AREA OF FOCUS RIGHT NOW?



A palliative approach, which focuses on maintaining quality of life from diagnosis to end of life, is now recognized as an important component of care to implement within healthcare systems because a palliative approach can give patients and families the opportunity to find support in a holistic environment.



## WHAT CAN I DO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PALLIATIVE APPROACH?

A good start would be to visit our website (<https://spaltc.ca/>), which has helpful resources and information on these topics. Opening conversations about topics like the palliative approach and long-term care with your family and friends can be a great way to both learn and share information.

### 1 RECEIVING A CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION DIAGNOSIS

Examples: dementia, frailty, heart disease

### 2 INTEGRATING A PALLIATIVE APPROACH

At any stage of illness, in any setting, access sensitive support, treatment, and symptom relief

### 3 MOVING INTO LONG-TERM CARE

Access additional support from a team trained in a palliative approach

### 4 RECEIVING END OF LIFE CARE

With more focused attention to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual comfort

A palliative approach is for **everyone** with chronic health conditions

**FACT:** Pain is not always a part of dying. Pain experienced during end-of-life can be managed in many ways, including but not limited to acetaminophen, morphine, oxycodone, and non-pharmacological approaches to pain.

**MYTH #2**  
Pain is a part of dying.

**MYTH #3**  
Treatment stops when a palliative approach starts.

**FACT:** A palliative approach can begin as early as the diagnosis of a life-limiting illness and can be done in combination with active treatment.

**FACT:** A palliative approach does not accelerate the dying process. It focuses on giving comfort and the best quality of life from diagnosis of an advanced illness until the end of life.

**MYTH #4**  
A palliative approach speeds up the process of dying.

**MYTH #5**  
Raising the topic of a palliative approach with patients takes away their hope.

**FACT:** A palliative approach ensures the best quality of life for those diagnosed with an advanced illness. Hope becomes less about a cure and more about living a life as full as possible; according to how each person wants to live and die.

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