

# 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](http://www.virtualhospice.ca)  
[advancecareplanning.ca](http://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)

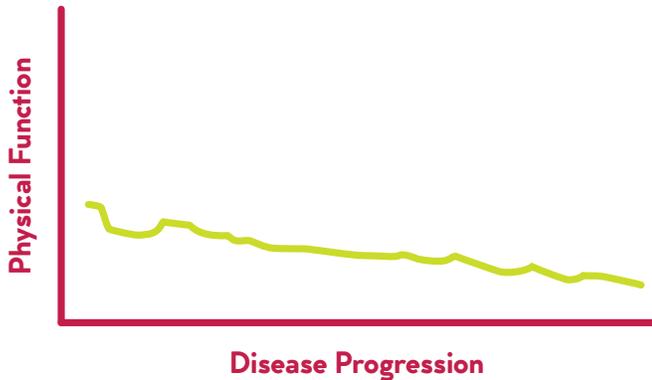
### **FRAIL RESIDENTS:**

- 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?

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## Online Resources

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

**SPA-LTC**  
Strengthening a Palliative Approach  
in Long-Term Care

## Contact Us

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