

How and When Does Hospice Start?

Begin Hospice Care

Anyone can inquire about hospice services. You or your loved one may call a local hospice and request services. The hospice staff will then contact your physician to determine if a referral to hospice is appropriate. Another way to inquire about hospice is to talk with your physician, and he or she can make a referral to hospice.

Hospice can begin as soon as a ‘referral’ is made by the person’s doctor. The hospice staff will then contact the person referred to set up an initial meeting to review the services the hospice will offer and sign the necessary consent forms for care to begin. Usually, care is ready to begin within a day or two of a referral. However, in urgent situations, service may begin sooner.

When is the right time to ask about hospice?

Now is the best time to learn more about hospice care and ask questions about what to expect. Although end-of-life care may be difficult to discuss, it is best for loved ones and family members to share their wishes long before it becomes a concern. This can greatly reduce stress when the time for hospice becomes apparent. By having these discussions in advance, uncomfortable situations can be avoided. Instead, educated decisions can be made that include the advice and input of loved ones.