



Checklist

Recognising the End of Life

- Think about all the patients in your care today. Ask yourself the 'surprise' question about each patient. *The 'surprise' question: Would you be surprised if this patient dies within the next few months/weeks/days?* Is it time to initiate a conversation about end-of-life care? How do you raise this within your team?

- Recognise the next time a patient uses one of the end-of-life triggers. If the patient wishes, start a conversation about their concerns and preferences. Use active listening and empathy but be honest. Do not provide false hope and don't shy away from using the word 'dying'. Make sure patients' preferences are recorded and shared with other team members.

- Use **SPICT** (Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool) to identify patients at risk of deteriorating and dying: <https://www.spict.org.uk/>

- Check your patient is still happy with their care plan. Let them know they can revisit this. A trigger for this might be: them raising questions about an aspect of their care, a deterioration in their condition, new symptoms, or when they transition to the terminal phase.

- The Northern Adelaide Local Health Network have 'An example care plan for the Last Days of Life' https://www.endoflifeessentials.com.au/Portals/14/document/education/EOLC_plan_2016.pdf
Do you have a similar plan? Consider discussing this among the team.

- Consider printing this and placing it in the tea room as a reminder of some communication strategies: End-of-Life Essentials: Creating Conversations: https://www.endoflifeessentials.com.au/Portals/14/document/education/Creating_Conversations.pdf



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- Make yourself aware of the ACSQHC End-of-Life Care Audit toolkit. Find the person in your organisation responsible for QA and bring it to their attention:
<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/end-life-care/end-life-care-audit-toolkit>

**For resources go to the My Toolkit pages in End-of-Life Essentials
website: <https://www.endoflifeessentials.com.au/>**

Resources

Recognising the End-of-Life

Palliative Care Network of Wisconsin:

Fast Facts #235 [Prognostic Models in Critically Ill Adults \(ICU\)](#)

Fast Facts #253 [Palliative Care Consultation in the ICU](#)

From Palliative & End of Life care, A Blueprint for improvement:

- [Early recognition of approaching end of life](#)
 - [Quality care during the last days of life](#)
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Professor Hal Swerissen Visiting Fellow, Grattan Institute, [Dying in Australia](#). Deeble Institute Workshop: End of Life Care 13 April 2016

End of Life Essentials: [Creating Conversations](#)

From the University of Edinburgh, the [SPICT tool](#)

From SA Health: [Pharmacological Management of symptoms for adults in the last days of life](#)

From Northern Adelaide Local Health Network: [An example care plan for the Last Days of Life](#)

From Queensland University of Technology: [End of Life Law Australia: Palliative Medication](#)

End of Life Essentials: [Glossary of terms](#)

End of Life Essentials Able versus Novice: [Which one are You?](#)

CareSearch: [Assessing the Dying Patient](#)

CareSearch: [End of Life Symptoms](#)

CareSearch: [Recognising Last Year of Life](#)

Videos, Blogs and Podcasts

CareSearch Blog: Paul Tait: [Five quick tips for prescribing medicines in the last days of life](#)

CareSearch Blog: Maite Uribe: [Caring for dying patients in an acute hospital setting, three tips for getting it right](#)

CareSearch Blog: Kim Devery: [Learning how to recognise end of life](#)

The first episode of the RACP's CPD podcast Pomegranate, explores the [challenges doctors face in end-of-life decision making](#). Made by, and for, physicians, the peer-reviewed program features Fellows from across specialities and divisions speaking on issues that matter to them.

Further Reading

Chen CH, Kuo SC, Tang ST. Current status of accurate prognostic awareness in advanced/terminally ill cancer patients: Systematic review and meta-regression analysis. *Palliat Med.* 2017 May;31(5):406-418. doi: [10.1177/0269216316663976](https://doi.org/10.1177/0269216316663976) Epub 2016 Aug 4

Reid VL, McDonald R, Nwosu AC, Mason SR, Probert C, Ellershaw JE, Coyle S. [A systematically structured review of biomarkers of dying in cancer patients in the last months of life; An exploration of the biology of dying.](#) *PLoS One.* 2017 Apr 6;12(4):e0175123. eCollection 2017.

Cardona M, Stehlik P, Fawzy P, Byambasuren O, Anderson J, Clark J, Sun S, Scott I. Effectiveness and sustainability of deprescribing for hospitalized older patients near end of life: a systematic review. *Expert Opin Drug Saf.* 2021 Jan;20(1):81-91. doi: [10.1080/14740338.2021.1853704](https://doi.org/10.1080/14740338.2021.1853704). Epub 2020 Dec 21.

Cohen-Mansfield J, Skornick-Bouchbinder M, Brill S. Trajectories of End of Life: A Systematic Review. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci.* 2018 Apr 16;73(4):564-572. doi: [10.1093/geronb/gbx093](https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbx093).

Resources

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Kistler EA, Stevens E, Scott E, Philpotts LL, Greer JA, Greenwald JL. Triggered Palliative Care Consults: A Systematic Review of Interventions for Hospitalized and Emergency Department Patients. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2020 Feb 12:S0885-3924(20)30074-9. doi: [10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.02.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.02.001).

Downar J, Goldman R, Pinto R, Englesakis M, Adhikari NK. The "surprise question" for predicting death in seriously ill patients: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *CMAJ*. 2017 Apr 3;189(13):E484-E493. doi: [10.1503/cmaj.160775](https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.160775).

Sharpe KK, Noble C, Hiremagular B, Grealish L. Implementing an integrated pathway to care for the dying: is your organisation ready? *Int J Palliat Nurs*. 2018 Feb 2;24(2):70-78. doi: [10.12968/ijpn.2018.24.2.70](https://doi.org/10.12968/ijpn.2018.24.2.70).

Bloomer MJ, Ranse K, Butler A, Brooks L. A national Position Statement on adult end-of-life care in critical care. *Aust Crit Care*. 2021 Aug. Epub ahead of print. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aucc.2021.06.006>
