

Cardiac Hospice Care

Advanced heart conditions are the leading cause of hospitalizations among patients over 65 years old – and the number of people with such conditions is only increasing.

Even though heart failure is common, it can be misleading. Some people feel almost like their usual selves, even in the condition's very late stage – they may not realize how sick they truly are. Many people with advanced heart conditions are not being connected with the care they need.

That's where VNS Health cardiac hospice care comes in.

Caring for a loved one with an advanced illness, including heart disease, can be difficult – both physically and emotionally – and home hospice care provides the care your loved one needs, when they need it. Hospice care focuses on treating physical and emotional needs rather than on curing a person's illness.

Hospice care is not “giving up” at the very end. Instead, it offers your loved one the comfort and dignity they deserve – in the familiar surroundings of where they call home.

VNS Health's specially designed cardiac hospice care helps people with advanced heart conditions find comfort so they can live life to the fullest extent possible. Our skilled and compassionate experts also give caregivers the information and support they need during this challenging transition. The care team works closely with your loved one's cardiologist or primary care provider.

What Is Cardiac Hospice Care?

Cardiac hospice care aims to improve quality of life and reduce hospital visits for people with advanced heart failure and other

heart conditions by:

- Reducing pain, shortness of breath, and other symptoms caused by their condition
- Supporting caregivers and loved ones and reducing their worry

Without the stress of unneeded hospital stays and unwanted aggressive treatment and the panic that can come from symptoms like shortness of breath, you and your loved one can make the most of your time together.

Benefits of Cardiac Hospice Care

The key benefits of VNS Health cardiac hospice care include:

- Managing pain and other symptoms to enhance quality of life and meet goals of care
- Medications and equipment delivered to your home
- Heart failure [comfort pack](#) (also known as a hospice emergency kit), which contains emergency medications to address symptoms as they occur and help reduce hospital visits
- Round-the-clock caregiver helpline for patients and loved ones, including access to the hospice medical team

Who Is on My Loved One's Cardiac

Hospice Care Team?

- *Cardiac nurse practitioner*: Works with other cardiac hospice team members to make and oversee the personal care plan
- *Hospice medical director*: Consults with other hospice team members and health care providers
- *Nurse, physical therapist, social worker, and spiritual counselor*: Provide additional expertise and support as needed

When Should My Loved One Consider Cardiac Hospice Care?

To help you and your loved one determine when they might benefit from cardiac hospice care, look for these signs:

- More emergency room visits or calls to health care providers
- Longer – or more frequent – hospital stays
- Increased shortness of breath
- More need for oxygen, especially when resting
- Extra weakness or tiredness with more frequent chest pain
- Increased changes to treatment or medication, with less benefit
- Growing need for help with tasks such as dressing, bathing, and eating

Keep in mind that getting the right care early is important. Cardiac hospice care helps you and your loved one take advantage of the time you have left by providing extra support, reducing symptoms, and improving quality of life.

What You Can Expect From VNS Health Cardiac Hospice Care

While you're receiving cardiac hospice care, you can expect:

- Medical care related to your cardiac disease
- Personal care according to your care plan
- [Emotional support and spiritual care](#), including help resolving family issues and making peace
- Help with practical issues, such as creating a will or a health care proxy (a document naming a person to make care decisions for you if you lose the ability to do so)
- Oxygen, equipment, and medications delivered to your home
- Hospice [comfort pack](#), which includes emergency medication for common symptoms
- Other services as necessary

While your loved one is receiving cardiac hospice care, you can expect:

- Education about how to care for your loved one, what to expect, and what to do in an emergency

- Help with making decisions about care
- Round-the-clock access to a hospice nurse through VNS Health's caregiver helpline
- [Emotional support and spiritual care](#) to help you cope with your feelings and support other loved ones
- Support with family issues
- Respite care, which allows you to take a break or even attend an important family event knowing that your loved one is in good hands
- [Grief support](#) for 13 months to help you and your loved ones through milestones and anniversaries

Is Cardiac Hospice Care Covered by Insurance?

Yes, cardiac hospice care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, and most private insurance companies.