

MANAGING ANXIETY

What is anxiety?

- Not being able to sit still, rest or relax
- Sometimes when anxiety is severe, it is called agitation
- Happens for almost half of people very close to death
- The feeling of “wanting to jump out of your skin”

What are the signs of anxiety?

- Moving around without a known reason
- Muscle twitching
- Picking at or pulling at sheets, covers or clothing
- Trying to get out of bed over-and-over again
- Not being able to sleep
- Inability to get comfortable
- Fidgeting

What should you report to your Hospice Alliance nurse or team members?

- Any of the signs listed above
- Not being able to give medicines as they were ordered
- Things that you notice that makes anxiety worse, like lots of noise or lots of visitors
- Things that you notice that makes the anxiety better, such as soft and quiet music
- Concerns that you may have about handling the situation as a caregiver
- The need for support from hospice staff or friends
- Any situation that might be unsafe for your loved one or yourself

What can be done about anxiety?

Your Hospice team will try to find out why your loved one is anxious and discuss the treatments that might be best for you or your loved one.

Things that you can do:

- Give medicines ordered for anxiety when able
- Reassure your loved one often
- Play soothing music for relaxation
- Keep things calm and quiet as much as possible
- Limit the number of visitors to lessen noise
- Read favorite stories or letters in a quiet voice
- Hold your loved one’s hand and gently massage the hand and fingers
- Do not leave your loved one alone if restless to be sure of safety
- Let other family members or friends know what is happening so relief can be provided for you
- Remember that your loved ones restlessness may be a sign that death may be close
- Contact family members if you would rather not be alone

If you have any questions, please call us at 262-652-4400