

## When a person dies

After the person has died, do feel that you can spend time with them if this is your wish.

After a short while a member of the hospital team will verify that the person has died. The nursing staff will then attend to the personal needs of the person who has died, before transferring them to the hospital mortuary.

The ward team will provide you with the Bereavement Booklet which explains what you will need to do and how the Bereavement Office can help you. This booklet includes information on the legal process of registering a death and advice on bereavement support.

## Facilities

### Atrium Coffee Bar

8.30am – 8pm Monday to Friday  
9am – 8pm Sat/Sun

### Lansdown Restaurant

7.30am – 2.30pm daily

### Friends Coffee Shop

9.30am – 4pm Monday to Friday

## Car parking

Free car parking can be requested for the immediate family or close friends spending long periods of time visiting. Please request with the ward team.

## Helpful contacts

- The ward team  
Tel 01225 428331  
Hospital switchboard and ask for the appropriate ward
- Hospital Chaplaincy Team  
Tel 01225 824039
- Palliative Care Team  
Tel 01225 825567
- Dorothy House Hospice Care 24 hour advice line  
Tel 01225 722999
- Bereavement Office  
Tel 01225 824015

Royal United Hospitals Bath  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email:

[ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net)  
or telephone 01225 825656.

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# Care at the End of Life

A leaflet for families and friends



Priorities  
for Care

## Introduction

This leaflet is for the family and for close friends of someone who is nearing the end of their life in hospital. It includes information on how the person who is dying will be cared for and how you, their family and friends will be supported.

All our staff are committed to providing the best possible care to the person who is dying, respecting their privacy, dignity, choices and confidentiality.

Please do talk to staff about any concerns that you may have.

## Visiting

If your relative or friend is dying you are welcome to visit at any time, or stay with them during the day and/or night. Some people wish to be present when someone dies, while others prefer to visit for short periods. Visiting someone for long periods of time can be tiring, so it is important that you also look after yourself, rest and take regular meals and drinks.

At times our wards can be very busy. To reduce disturbance to other patients, the ward staff may ask that you visit the ward in pairs rather than in large groups. If you have children who would like to visit and you are unsure about bringing them in, please do discuss this with the nursing staff on the ward.

Sometimes a person can deteriorate unexpectedly. The ward staff will do their best to contact you, day or night, if that is your wish. However, there are occasions when this is not possible and the family or close friends may not be present when the person dies.

## The last days of life

When a person is dying it is important that we focus our care on their comfort and dignity.

The doctors and nurses will assess the individual needs of the dying person and identify the main priorities for their care, ensuring that they are supported and kept comfortable.

It is difficult to predict exactly what will happen or how fast a person will deteriorate, but the needs of the dying person will be reviewed regularly. In the last days the dying person is likely to become weaker, sleep more and require extra care from nursing staff. Their need for food and fluids can reduce. Fluids given in a drip may no longer be appropriate as this may increase symptoms. Moistening lips and regular mouth care can maintain comfort for the dying person.

The person who is dying may no longer be able to take their tablets. If they require medication to keep them comfortable, then it can be given by

injection, by suppository or through a small pump known as a syringe driver.

Sometimes a person's breathing changes as their condition deteriorates. Occasionally their breathing can become noisy. This is usually not distressing to the person who is dying, but changing their position or giving medication might help.

For most people, the final moments of life are peaceful, with a gradual slowing and irregularity of breathing before it ceases.

## What can you do to help?

At this time the dying person may be unconscious or asleep for long periods of time. We assume that they can still hear, so do feel free to talk to your relative or friend, or touch them as this can bring comfort. Often, just being present with the person nearing the end of life can be a great comfort.

You are welcome to support the nurses with providing care. This can include simple mouth care. The nurse will be able to advise you if this is something that you would like to do. The nursing staff will try to balance care needs with your need for private time together. If you do need the nurses or you are concerned about anything, do call them as they may not wish to disturb your privacy.