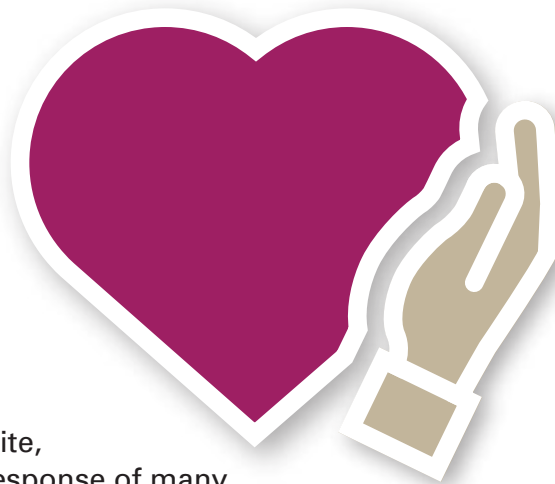


Caring for Patients with End Stage Heart Disease

Patients with end stage heart disease are likely to suffer at the end of life due to symptoms of advanced heart failure. Symptoms may include shortness of breath, orthopnea, edema, decreased endurance, chest pain or tightness, decreased appetite, anxiety and feelings of impending doom. The first response of many hospices may be to put the patient on Morphine in order to provide comfort.



Morphine, Oxycodone and hydrocodone may reduce the central nervous system response to high levels of carbon dioxide and low levels of oxygen in the blood. This will allow a gentler or more relaxed respiratory effort but it may not be the appropriate first response to shortness of breath accompanied by edema.

During the initial and subsequent assessments, the Family Hospice Nurse evaluates the cardiopulmonary status of the patient with end stage heart disease. This determines what interventions are most appropriate based on the patient and family goals for care, the attending physicians orders and the ability of caregivers to provide the care the patient needs. Family Hospice goes to work creating a written plan of care, obtaining equipment that helps in providing care and securing prescriptions that will continue to relieve the suffering a patient may experience.

The goal of hospice care at Family Hospice is to relieve suffering and improve the quality of a person's life by keeping them involved in the decision making process whenever possible, keeping them active and alert and supporting them in order for them to participate in activities of daily living.

In order to help patients meet their goals, their heart condition must be optimally treated with ACE Inhibitors, ARBs, Beta Blockers or whatever heart medication is needed to treat the heart disease.

Loop diuretics and vasodilators may be needed to promote comfort. Statins are usually discontinued when a patient enters hospice. In addition to related heart medications, patients have oxygen available, wheel chairs and electric hospital beds to assist with the day to day care of the patient. We can alleviate edema, shortness of breath, assist with bathing/showering and support caregiver efforts. As the end stage heart disease progresses, additional symptoms may become evident, requiring additional pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions. Family Hospice uses all of its tools to treat patients, not just relying on narcotic and non-narcotic medications.



GRIEF SUPPORT

Family Hospice has its own grief support service called The Heartlinks Grief Center. It's mission is to be the support center for all grieving people in our community. We began as a small program in 1997, supporting children who had a lost a loved one in hospice. We have grown into a full-service center that provides peer support, individual and family counseling and mobile programs to people of all ages in our service area.



(618) 277-1800 • support@myheartlinks.com

MUSIC THERAPY

Music Therapists are certified allied health professionals, specially trained in hospice and palliative care. Our therapists assess patients to determine strategies for pain relief and emotional care. They provide personalized therapeutic sessions for individual hospice patients or whole family groups.



- MUSIC STIRS MEMORIES
- MUSIC AFFECTS MOOD
- MUSIC SOOTHES MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Any Family Hospice patient can qualify, free of charge.

(618) 277-1800 • info@familyhospice.org

PET THERAPY

Certified therapy teams visit with patients wherever they reside – at home or professional care settings. For some patients, contact with these special animals evoke memories of pets in their lives.



“One of the most fundamental advantages of animal-assisted therapy over other therapeutic modalities is that it provides the patient a much-needed opportunity to give affection as well as receive it.”

Dr. Andrew Weil

Any Family Hospice patient can qualify, free of charge.

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Family Hospice is a community based not-for-profit program providing exceptional care to our patients and their families. Family Hospice of Belleville is a Medicare Certified Hospice Program. Our vision at Family Hospice is to help the patient and their families facing serious illness find **the right care, at the right time and for the right reason.**



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