

Family Caregiver Checklist for Hospice

A practical, compassionate guide to help families navigate each stage of the hospice journey

◆ Westlake Village Hospice, INC

◆ Medicare-Certified Provider

◆ Updated 2025

When Hospice Begins

The first days can feel overwhelming. This checklist guides you through the most important immediate steps:

ENROLLMENT & PAPERWORK

- Medicare Hospice Election Statement signed
- Primary physician notified of hospice enrollment
- Hospice agency contact numbers saved in phone
- 24/7 on-call nurse number written and posted visibly
- Advance Directive / Living Will documents located and given to hospice team
- Healthcare Power of Attorney identified and informed
- DNR order discussed with physician (if desired)

HOME SETUP

- Hospital bed delivered and set up in accessible room
- Medical equipment (wheelchair, oxygen, walker) in place
- Comfort kit medications received and stored safely
- Clear pathway for ambulance if needed
- Emergency contacts written on refrigerator

Weekly Caregiver Tasks

MEDICAL MONITORING

- Log any changes in pain level, breathing, or alertness to report to nurse
- Ensure all medications are administered on schedule

- Keep the "comfort kit" stocked — request refills before running out
- Confirm next nursing visit time and date
- Ask hospice nurse about new symptoms — do not wait for the visit

PERSONAL CARE

- Aide visit scheduled for bathing and personal hygiene
- Mouth care performed at least twice daily if patient can't eat
- Repositioning every 2 hours to prevent bedsores
- Comfortable clothing and bedding checked

EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUAL

- Social worker visit completed for family counseling
- Chaplain visit offered and accepted/declined per patient preference
- Ask patient about any unfinished wishes or conversations
- Take a break — arrange respite care if caregiver needs rest

Signs of Caregiver Burnout — Watch For:

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Feeling resentful, hopeless, or overwhelmed
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Neglecting your own medical appointments
- Increased use of alcohol, food, or medications to cope

You cannot pour from an empty cup. If you are experiencing burnout, call us immediately. Inpatient Respite Care is a Medicare benefit specifically for you — up to 5 days of professional inpatient care so you can rest.

As the End Nears — What to Expect

- Signs of active transition discussed with hospice nurse
- Family members who wish to be present have been notified
- Religious or spiritual rites arranged if desired
- Funeral home selected in advance (not required before death)

- Hospice nurse instructed on what to do and who to call at time of death
- Personal effects and keepsake wishes noted

At time of death: Call the hospice on-call nurse FIRST — before calling 911. Our nurse will come to pronounce the death and guide you calmly through each next step. There is no rush. Take the time you need.

After Your Loved One Passes

- Bereavement counseling offered and scheduled (covered by Medicare for 13 months)
- Funeral home contacted
- Hospice equipment picked up (we arrange this)
- Medications returned or safely disposed
- Death certificates obtained (funeral home assists)
- Medicare and Social Security notified of death
- Support group information received from hospice social worker

WE ARE WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Call us 24/7 — any question, any hour.

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