

Choosing Hospice: What Questions to Ask

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Choosing a hospice care agency is an important and deeply personal decision. Asking the right questions can help ensure the agency provides compassionate, high-quality, and appropriate care for your loved one.

Here are some key considerations and questions to ask:

General Care & Services

- ✓ What professionals are on the hospice care team (e.g. doctor, social worker, chaplain)?
 - ✓ How often will each team member visit my loved one?
 - ✓ Can my loved one still see their primary care doctor?
 - ✓ What services are available (e.g., pain management, emotional/spiritual support, respite care)?
 - ✓ What levels of care does your hospice agency offer?
 - ✓ What happens if my loved one improves and no longer qualifies for hospice?
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Availability & Emergency Support

- ✓ Is someone available 24/7 for emergencies or questions?
 - ✓ Will my loved one have the same nurses and care professionals?
 - ✓ What is your response time if we call after hours or on weekends?
 - ✓ What types of services are available after hours?
 - ✓ Who do we contact with concerns about our loved one's health or care?
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Pain & Comfort Care Management

- ✓ How do you manage my loved one's pain and other symptoms?
- ✓ Can my loved one continue with their current medications or treatments?
- ✓ How do I know if my loved one is taking too much medication?
- ✓ Do you offer palliative treatments that improve quality of life without prolonging suffering?

- ✓ What non-pharmacological options do you recommend to help my loved one?
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In-Home Care and Support

- ✓ How much care will I have to provide?
 - ✓ Will someone help with bathing, dressing, and daily activities if needed?
 - ✓ Can we get equipment and supplies delivered (e.g., hospital bed, oxygen, adult depends)?
 - ✓ What equipment does hospice provide to make it easier in caring for a loved one?
 - ✓ How often will a care aid come to help my loved one with personal care?
 - ✓ What types of treatments can be provided in the home?
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Costs & Coverage

- ✓ What services are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance?
 - ✓ Are there any out-of-pocket costs we should be aware of?
 - ✓ How long will my loved one be able to stay on hospice?
 - ✓ Is facility hospice care covered by insurance?
 - ✓ Do you help families with insurance paperwork and benefits?
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Family Support and Communication

- ✓ What counseling or spiritual services are available for my loved one and our family?
 - ✓ Do you offer bereavement support or grief counseling after my loved one passes?
 - ✓ Can chaplain services be tailored to our specific religious or cultural background?
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Transitions and End-of-Life

- ✓ How can your agency prepare my family for the end of life?
- ✓ What happens if my loved one's pain and suffering cannot be controlled at home?
- ✓ How do I know when my loved one is nearing end of life?
- ✓ What happens after my loved one passes away?

Disclaimer: *This tool is designed to support caregivers by providing guidance, but it should not be used as a substitute for professional recommendations from your loved one's treatment team.*