

Residential Aged Care Palliative Care Trolleys

Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE) Project

Introduction

Palliative care trolleys are a useful way to ensure items are readily available to support residents, their families, and staff. This document provides a list of items that facilities may wish to include in their palliative care trolleys.

The following supplies are suggested as a guide only. It is intended as a starting point for establishing palliative care trolleys for your facility. You may tailor this to suit your local needs in accordance with your facility or organisational policies and procedures. It is recommended that your Palliative/End-of-Life Care Committee, or a similar group, review the suggested items and determine what is best for the facility.

Implementation considerations

- **How will you ensure the trolley stays clean, organised, and relevant?** There is a risk that trolleys may be neglected and become a 'dumping ground' for irrelevant items. Consider implementing a regular clean, check and restock process, or assign a person or team to look after the trolleys.
- **Where will the trolley be located? Is it safe for all items to be there?** Usually these trolleys are kept at the resident's bedside. The presence of items such as needles and cannulas could be a safety issue if the trolley is located elsewhere, such as in the hallway. These items may need to be locked away to ensure they cannot be accessed by the public.
- **How will staff know what is in the trolley?** It may be helpful to include a laminated list of contents to help guide staff. This will also assist with restocking. An editable checklist is available on request.

The list was developed by the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service SPACE Team in consultation with SPACE clinicians across Queensland.

Further reading

ConnectABILITY. (n.d.). *Comfort Care Basket*. <https://connectability.ca/2014/09/11/comfort-care-basket/>

Oliver, M., Hillock S., Moore, C., Goble, H and Asbury, N. (2010) *Comfort care packs: a little bit of hospice in hospital?* International Journal of Palliative Care Nursing 16 (10): 511-515

Residential Aged Care Palliative Care Trolleys: Suggested contents

Mouth care

- Normal saline mouthwash
- Sodium bicarbonate mouthwash
- Ready-made or plain mouth swabs
- Lip balm/Paraffin
- Water spray bottle (no need for expensive oral lubricating sprays)

Eye care

- Lubricating eye drops
- Soft gauze swabs
- Soft tissues

Continuous subcutaneous infusion supplies

- 20ml, 30ml Luer Lok syringes
- Drawing up needles
- Alcowipes/skin prep wipes
- Normal saline solution (10ml)
- Saf-T-Intima cannulae (24G)
- Opsite or similar occlusive dressings
- Extension sets
- Bungs
- Surgical tape
- NIKI syringe pump/driver
- Spare 9V batteries
- Medication labels

Documentation

Some residential aged care facilities have electronic medical records; however, there may be value in keeping hard copies of important documents by the bedside.

- Terminal care pathway
- Symptom assessment chart
- Completed Advance Care Planning documentation or resuscitation orders
- Quick reference guides/fact sheets on symptom management for health professionals
- Life Extinct paperwork

Family care

- Tissues
- Things to pass the time: crosswords, games, magazines, books/colouring-in books for children
- Information on self-care (see *Carer education resources* below)
- Snacks, treats, nice tea or coffee sachets
- Ceramic mugs for hot drinks
- Basic hygiene starter packs: toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, soap
- Mobile phone charger/s

Carer education resources

Provide printed versions of education resources for carers and families. A list of resources for consideration is provided on the next page.

Other

- Aromatherapy diffuser and oils
- Moisturising creams or oils
- Door signs to discreetly signify to staff that the resident is dying. You may wish to use Queensland Health's [Compassionate Care Door Signs](#)
- Music: Bluetooth speaker/CD player
- Hand cream samples
- Supplies relevant to facility rituals to acknowledge a resident's death
- Shrouds, body bag, tags

Carer education resources

Resource	Author
Palliative and end-of-life care	
Understanding care at the end of life: Information for patients, family members and carers	Queensland Health
A guide to palliative care in Queensland	PalAssist
Navigating Palliative Care in Queensland: Residential Aged Care	PalAssist
What is Palliative Care?	CareSearch
Palliative Care	Dementia Australia
Specialist palliative care service information	Local Hospital and Health Service
The dying process	
Recognising dying	Carer Help
The dying process	Palliative Care Australia
Ways to be there in the last few days	Carer Help
Deathbed etiquette	St Mary's University
Caring for the dying person	Carer Help
Caring for yourself at the bedside	Carer Help
PalAssist resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About morphine • Bowel care • Breathlessness • Caring for someone who is dying • Difficulty sleeping • Restlessness • They've stopped eating and drinking • Understanding dying • Why am I so tired? 	PalAssist
Bereavement support	
Queensland Health bereavement resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone dies: A practical guide for family and friends • During sad news and sorry business: Information for family (First Nations) • Easy English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese language resources 	Queensland Health
After the death	Carer Help
Practical matters: Arranging a funeral, legal matters, ashes and belongings	HammondCare
Bereavement: The first twelve months and beyond	HammondCare
Who to notify?	HammondCare
Time with the children	Cruse Bereavement Care
My Granddad plants people! A simple guide for grown-ups when children ask questions about death	The Co-operative Funeral Service
Grieving children: Guidelines for adults who care	National Centre for Childhood Grief