

What's Your Hospice IQ?

Take this quiz and find out! True or False?

True False

- 1. About 90% of us die from long, slow illnesses, rather than suddenly.
- 2. Half of the people who die in hospitals die with persistent pain.
- 3. Most Americans want to die at home.
- 4. Most Americans actually die at home.
- 5. Hospice is only for people with cancer.
- 6. Hospice programs support the wishes of dying people.
- 7. Hospice care is rarely provided in the home.
- 8. Hospice care requires that you stop all medical treatment.
- 9. You can receive hospice care indefinitely.
- 10. Hospice care is very expensive.

What Concerns You About the End of Life?

If you are like most people, you worry about:

- ❖ Pain and other unpleasant symptoms
- ❖ Being alone
- ❖ Being a burden
- ❖ Being hooked up to machines
- ❖ Losing dignity
- ❖ Losing control; having your wishes ignored
- ❖ Bankrupting the family
- ❖ Dying with unfinished business

Hospice eliminates or reduces these concerns, so that you and your family can focus on what's most important.

What is Hospice?

Hospice is not a place; it's a well-managed system of care for dying people and their families. With hospice, people with life-limiting illnesses can focus on life and live each day to the fullest. With pain and other symptoms under control, people enjoy the time they have left, while finishing the business of their lives: financial, legal, emotional, and spiritual.

Hospice is comprehensive care that is provided by a coordinated team of doctors, nurses, social workers, grief counselors, spiritual counselors, home health aides, and volunteers.

All services are provided at home, if possible. Otherwise, inpatient care is available in hospice facilities, special units in hospitals, and nursing homes.

Bereavement support is available for the family for at least 13 months after the death.

The Medicare Hospice Benefit

The following hospice care costs are covered in full by the Medicare Hospice Benefit:

- ❖ Skilled nursing services
- ❖ Volunteer services
- ❖ Physician visits
- ❖ Durable medical equipment
- ❖ Medical equipment and supplies
- ❖ Skilled therapy (for example, physical and speech therapy)
- ❖ Home health aide and homemaker services
- ❖ Social worker services (for example, finding resources, helping family cope)
- ❖ Spiritual counseling
- ❖ Nutrition counseling
- ❖ Bereavement support for the family

If you qualify for Medicare, you have already paid for this coverage! For you, hospice care is usually covered 100%, although hospices are allowed to collect the following co-payments:

- ❖ Drugs for pain and other symptoms (\$5 or less)
- ❖ Respite care to relieve the caregiver (5% of cost)

You're in Control

When you need hospice, you can:

- ❖ Choose any hospice
You can choose any Medicare-certified hospice in the country (even outside your managed care network, if you have a Medicare + Choice or Medicare Advantage plan).
- ❖ Keep your own doctor
Your doctor can continue to follow you and coordinate your care with the hospice physician.
- ❖ Continue managed care
You can stay enrolled in your managed care organization to receive healthcare services unrelated to the terminal illness.

Eligibility for Hospice

To qualify for the Medicare Hospice Benefit:

- ❖ You must have Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance).
- ❖ Your doctor and the hospice medical director must confirm that you probably have a life expectancy of less than six months.
- ❖ You must agree to choose hospice care instead of your regular Medicare benefits for your terminal illness. If you change your mind, you have a right to leave hospice and pursue aggressive treatment. Later, you may re-enter the hospice program.

Hospice — A resting place for a traveler on a difficult journey

What's Your Hospice IQ? Quiz Answers and Discussion

- T 1. Only 10% of deaths are sudden. The overwhelming majority of people die from long-term illnesses.
- T 2. While many people who die in hospitals and nursing homes have persistent pain, almost all hospice patients are relieved from pain and other symptoms.
- T 3. About 70% of Americans want to die at home.
- F 4. Only about 25% of Americans actually die at home. However, most hospice patients die at home, surrounded by loved ones.
- F 5. Hospice is for people with cancer, Alzheimer's, AIDS, cardiac, liver, respiratory, and kidney diseases, or any life-limiting illness. Hospice patients include young people and even children.
- T 6. Hospices help people die with dignity by honoring their wishes.
- F 7. Most hospice care is provided at home, but it can also be provided in nursing homes, hospitals, and free-standing hospices.
- F 8. Choosing hospice means stopping attempts to cure life-limiting illness in favor of comfort care and relief from symptoms. You still receive curative care for other illnesses.
- T 9. After two initial 90-day periods, the doctor may recertify the patient for an indefinite number of additional 60-day periods of hospice care, as long as the patient is eligible.
- F 10. Hospice care is virtually free under Medicare. Commercial insurance plans also have comprehensive hospice benefits.

What's Your Hospice IQ?

- 9-10 correct You are a Hospice Genius!
7-8 correct You are above average on the Hospice IQ Scale
0-6 correct You need to learn more about hospice

Steps You Can Take Now

To prepare for comfort and dignity at the end of life:

- ❖ Tell your doctor and family that you want hospice care if the time comes.
- ❖ Complete a Medical Power of Attorney* (designates someone to make medical decisions for you if you are unable to do so).
- ❖ Complete a Living Will* (spells out your wishes for your medical care if you are unable to communicate).
- ❖ Find out about the hospice services in your community.
 - ❖ Ask your physician, hospital discharge planner, or case manager.
 - ❖ Look under "Hospice" in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book.
 - ❖ Visit these websites:
www.americanhospice.org (click on "Hospice Search")
www.nhpco.org (click on "Find a Provider")

**Forms for a Medical Power of Attorney and a Living Will may be available from your physician, lawyer, hospital, or long-term care facility. Forms can be downloaded from the Internet, but you may be charged a fee.*

To learn more, please contact us:

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