



***Palliative care is a medical specialty. It focuses on preventing and relieving suffering and improving quality of life for people with serious illness.***

***It does not depend on expected outcomes. Palliative care can be given at the same time as healing treatment.***

*Adapted from  
Diane Meir, MD, Director,  
Center to Advance Palliative Care*

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Talk with a member of your baby's care team if you have questions or concerns.

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## **Palliative Care**

*For patients and families  
in the NICU*

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*This brochure answers questions about the role of palliative care for patients and families in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).*

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## What is palliative care?

Palliative care is a special service that provides extra support to patients and families dealing with serious illness.

We know that a long hospital stay and intensive care are major sources of stress and distress. Our Palliative Care Team helps families communicate with the healthcare team. We also provide ongoing support in many other ways to families throughout their loved one's hospital stay.

Palliative Care is often confused with end-of-life care or hospice care. The role of Palliative Care in the NICU is much broader.

Neonates often deal with serious illness and must stay in the hospital for many weeks. Because of this, we start working with you soon after your baby is born. We focus on providing you with continuity and support.

## How can the Palliative Care Team help?

While your infant is in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the Palliative Care Team can help you:

- Connect to the information and resources you need

- Deal with your feelings about not being able to take your baby home right after birth
- Manage the feelings that come with serious illness
- Talk about complex medical issues and make important decisions, when needed
- Match your goals with proposed medical treatments

## What can we expect when we meet with the Palliative Care Team?

The Palliative Care Team will meet with you to talk about what is most important to you, your infant, and the entire family.

Here are some of the questions we may ask during our first meeting:

- What is important to your family?
- What is your understanding of your infant's current medical situation?
- What are you hoping for?
- What concerns you most?
- Is there anything else that would help us take better care of you and your child?

The Palliative Care Team will support you in many ways during your infant's stay in the NICU. We will work with the primary NICU team, social work, nurses, and other staff to make sure your child receives the best care. We are an ongoing resource for you throughout your infant's hospital stay.

## Who is on the Palliative Care Team?

You may meet with one of these doctors on the Palliative Care Team:



*Dr. David Woodrum,  
Neonatology,  
Bioethics*



*Dr. Jeff Beck,  
Pediatrics,  
Palliative Care*