

Welcome to 5 West Palliative Care

Dartmouth General Hospital

Important phone numbers

- › Unit: 902-465-8371
- › Patient switchboard: 902-465-8300

Welcome to 5 West Palliative Care

What is palliative care?

- Palliative care:
 - › enhances the quality of life of people with life-limiting illnesses by preventing and relieving suffering.
 - › helps people cope during a loved one's illness and death, and during the grief process.
- Palliative care gives:
 - › Relief from pain and other symptoms
 - › Emotional and spiritual care
 - › End-of-life care
- It is important to know that palliative care does not hurry or delay death. It helps people live as actively as possible until their death.

About Unit 5 West

- Each room has a closet and bedside table for your clothes and belongings.
- Some rooms have a TV that can use the hospital's Wi-Fi network (DGH-Public) to watch streaming services.

- You may put up cards or pictures to help you feel more at home. Please **do not** put tape on the walls. We can give you sticky tack, if needed.
- There is a kitchenette with a microwave that your loved ones or support persons are welcome to use. **Please label all food with your name and the date.** For infection control reasons, any food that is not labelled will be thrown away.
- There are public washrooms on both sides of the elevators on the main floor.
- You are welcome to use your loved one's washroom if it does not interfere with their care. Please note that the patient washroom doors do not lock. This is for safety reasons.

Phone service

- There is a bedside phone in each room. Your loved ones and support persons can contact you by calling the switchboard and asking to talk with you.
 - › Phone: 902-465-8300
- If you would like to make an outgoing call, ask your nurse for the portable phone.

Wi-Fi

- Free public Wi-Fi is available in the hospital.
- Please tell staff if you are having trouble connecting and we will do our best to help you.

Parking

- There is a fee for parking in the main parking lot.
 - › \$2 for the first hour (and any part of the first hour)
 - › \$1 per hour after the first hour to a maximum of \$8 a day (per single entry)
 - › \$4 overnight
- Monthly parking is available at a discounted rate by visiting the parking office.

Other information

- There are extra blankets available. If you would like one, please tell a member of your care team.
- You may be able to take a shower. Please talk with your care team.

- If your loved ones or support persons would like to stay overnight, please ask your nurse for a pull-out chair or bed. Your loved ones are responsible for keeping their sleeping area clean.
- If you would like to have a pet visit, please talk with your health care team.

What is a usual day like on the unit?

- 7 a.m.: Nursing staff arrive for day shift
- 8 to 9 a.m.: The team will check on you, update your whiteboard for the day, help you with breakfast, and give you your morning medications.
- When your nurse comes to see you, you can plan what you would like to do that day.
- After breakfast or when you are ready, your nurse can help you wash up.
- Your nurse will give you medications throughout the day and help you with meals, if needed.
- Your doctor will see you at some point during the day.
- 7 p.m.: Nursing staff arrive for night shift
- 8 to 10 p.m.: Your nurse will check on you and help you get ready for bed.

Who is on my health care team?

You will see many health care providers during your stay. All staff on the unit work together as a team.

Nurses and Care Team Assistants (CTAs)

- You will have a primary nurse assigned to your care. You may also have a Care Team Assistant (CTA) helping with your care.
- Different nurses may answer your call bell or help you throughout the day.

Doctors

- A staff doctor will be responsible for your medical care. There may be a resident (doctor in training) working with the staff doctor to find the best plan of care for you.
- The staff doctor changes each week on Monday morning. When the incoming doctor starts, they get an update about your time in the hospital and any decisions you may have made about your health care.
- The staff doctor usually visits each patient once a day. If your loved ones or support persons are not there when the doctor visits you, you can ask the doctor to come back at another time.

- It may help to write down any questions you have for the doctor so they can answer them when they see you.
- A doctor is always on call for emergencies.

Volunteers

- Trained palliative care volunteers give comfort and support to enhance the quality of life of patients, loved ones, and support persons.
- Volunteers complement the work of the health care team by responding to physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs.

Social workers

- Social workers support the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social health of patients and their loved ones. They can help with:
 - › Counselling
 - › Navigating the health care system
 - › Finding resources (like clothes or financial support)
 - › Advocating for you and your loved ones

Bereavement Program

- Services include:
 - › Counselling for you and your loved ones, alone or as a group
 - › Bereavement support groups
 - › Memorial services
 - › Grief education
- If you are interested in any of these services, ask a member of your health care team to connect you with the bereavement coordinator.

Unit clerk

- The clerk at the front desk helps keep the unit running by answering phones and questions, and making sure that paperwork is in order.
- They can point you in the right direction if you are looking for something, or help you find the best person to address your questions or concerns.

Physiotherapist (PT)

- The PT assesses and treats people with possible or actual impairments, pain, functional limitations, or disabilities.
- In palliative care, the PT will focus on your wishes and helping you improve your quality of life.

- Physiotherapy may include walking, breathing exercises, and transfers (like moving from your bed to a chair or a wheelchair). They can also help with discharge planning to safely get you back home.

Occupational therapist (OT)

- The OT works with you and your loved ones to support you in taking part in activities you find meaningful.
- They can identify and arrange for equipment you may need (like a wheelchair, a hospital bed, bathroom equipment) in the hospital and at home to support your goals.

Spiritual care

- Chaplains give emotional and spiritual support to people and their loved ones of any ethnic or religious background, as well as people who do not identify with a religious practice.
- If you would like to meet with a chaplain, ask a member of your health care team.

Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Patient Navigator (MIPN)

- The MIPN offers support and advocacy for Mi'kmaw and Indigenous patients and their loved ones. They help to bridge the gap between Indigenous patients and health care providers. They can coordinate access to:
 - › Health care providers and services
 - › Cultural and spiritual services
 - › Community partners that offer services for Mi'kmaw and Indigenous peoples
- We are able to do smudging on the unit. Please tell a member of your health care team if this is something you or your loved ones would like to do.
- To contact the MIPN:
 - › Email: czmipn@nshealth.ca

Continuing care coordinator

- The continuing care coordinator helps you and your loved ones coordinate any supports you may need if you are discharged home.

Unit aide

- The unit aide makes sure that the unit is stocked with supplies.
- They may also answer when you ring your call bell and get the health care team member you need.

Nutrition and Food Services staff

- Dietary staff will bring you your meals.
- You or your loved ones can order your meals. Dietary staff can come to your room to take your order or your loved ones can call.
 - › Phone: 902-473-8545
 - or**
 - › Phone (from a bedside phone): 4777

Housekeeping

- Housekeeping staff make sure that the unit is clean. They will clean your room and empty your garbage each day.
- Please tell them if you would prefer that they come back later for any reason.

Interpreters

- Interpreter services are available in many different languages for patients, loved ones, and staff. This service is free. If you need an interpreter, please ask your nurse.

Feedback

- This service is for patients and their loved ones who have concerns, compliments, or feedback about any part of their hospital stay. You can share these directly with your health care provider(s) or the unit/department manager, or you can contact our Patient Relations team.

To talk with a patient representative:

- › Phone: 902-473-2133
- › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
- › Email: healthcareexperience@nshealth.ca

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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