

Tips for Family and Friends

Before a care decision is made:

- Consider your relative or friend's end of life values and preferences
- Stay informed and ask questions
- Encourage your relative or friend to be as independent and participate in as many decisions as he or she is able

With a health care provider, explore and discuss options:

- To prevent or reduce injury from falling
- To prevent or reduce confusion (e.g. discontinue unnecessary medications)
- To manage symptoms from multiple chronic conditions
- For diet (e.g. supplements to deal with swallowing problems or weight loss)
- For dealing with fatigue (e.g. promote physical activity)

Your health is important too. If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek support from the Family Councils of Ontario.

www.fco.ngo

Phone: (416) 487-4355

Toll-Free: 1-888-283-8806

What Should I Ask About?

- What are my or my relative or friend's biggest fears about his/her health?
- How can I help maintain my or my relative or friend's quality of life?
- What should I expect when I am or my relative or friend is dying?

Online Resources

- 1) **John Hopkins Medicine:** tips for staying healthy, helpful definitions
http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/healthy_aging/healthy_body/stay-strong-four-ways-to-beat-the-frailty-risk
- 2) **City of Toronto:** family LTC resources
 - Go to <http://www1.toronto.ca/>
 - Search "Long-term care family education". Select the first link.
 - Topics include: assistive devices, decision-making, continence, etc.
- 3) **Main Line Gastroenterology Associates (MLGA):**
<http://mainlinegi.com/patient-education/hw-view.php?DOCHWID=abo3671>

The Palliative Approach for Advanced Frailty in Long Term Care

Version 2

A Resource for Residents, Family and Friends



Technology
Evaluation
IN THE ELDERLY™



What is a Palliative Approach?

This pamphlet was made to help persons with **Advanced Frailty** and their families know what to expect at the end of life so they can plan ahead. Talking about preferences early on is an important first step to a **Palliative Approach to Care**.

A Palliative Approach:

- Is for residents in long term care (LTC) with conditions that have no cure
- Shifts focus from prolonging life to maintaining quality of life
- Is an active approach that can start at **any stage of chronic illness**
- Is part of usual care
- Does not require a referral

A Palliative Approach includes:

- Treatment of curable conditions
- Pain and symptom management
- Social and spiritual support

For more information, please visit:

www.virtualhospice.ca

www.advancecareplanning.ca

What is Frailty?

Frailty is a **chronic progressive life-limiting illness**. This means that symptoms worsen over time and may affect how long one lives. Frailty is:

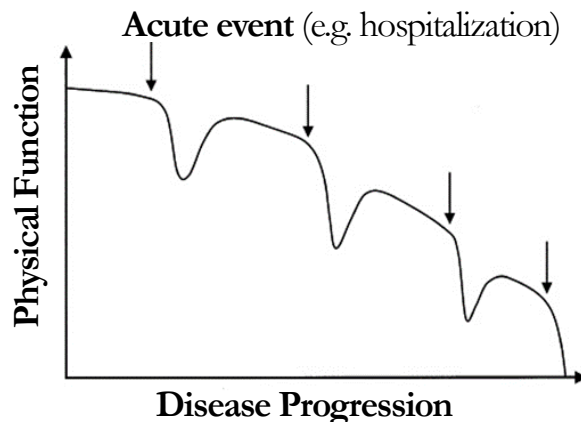
- An age related decline in health
- Linked to cognitive problems and having multiple chronic conditions (e.g. dementia, heart disease, cancer)

Frail residents:

- Are at higher risk for falls, hospital admission, disability, and death
- Have problems with multiple body systems

How does Frailty progress?

It is difficult to predict how long frail persons may live, so it is good to **hope for the best and plan for the worst**.



Living with Frailty



The progression of frailty cannot be reversed and there is no cure. Being well-informed will help you to make care decisions if you are able.

Frail residents may show a decline in:

- Muscle mass, and strength (weakness)
- Energy (fatigue)
- Walking speed or mobility
- Activity levels (lies in bed or sits in a chair for most of the day)
- Ability to do daily activities (e.g. eating, toileting, bathing, walking)
- Appetite (weight loss)
- Cognitive function

The end stage of frailty is called **“failure to thrive”**. It may be related to one or more diseases.