

PRIMARY CARE 10 TOP TIPS

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Getting the best from your Specialist Palliative Care Team

- 1** Palliative medicine is not just for malignant disease.
- 2** Don't wait for a crisis with your patients; the sooner you contact palliative care the more likely it is that problems can be avoided.
- 3** Keep up to date with local palliative care guidelines.
- 4** Try to plan care for your patients well in advance. Use your Gold Standards Framework (GSF) meetings and out of hours (OOH) handover forms to look not only at what has happened but also to plan what you are going to be doing. Get medications and care plans in the house and communicate with the out of hours team. In many areas, providing a handover form to the out of hours service can mean the difference between a twenty minute wait and six hour wait for a call back or visit.
- 5** If things change with a patient who we are jointly managing please tell us.
- 6** Local policies may vary, but specialist palliative care advice is usually available 24 hours a day; all you have to do is pick up the phone.
- 7** Most units will be happy to do joint visits or domiciliary visits to patients if needed.
- 8** Most units run educational sessions and can arrange for a short clinical attachment if you are interested.
- 9** Don't assume that we won't be able to admit your patient acutely. Many units are small and may have waiting lists for beds, but if they fit the referral criteria and acute admission is appropriate, then many units will admit 24 hours a day.
- 10** Don't be afraid to ask for help, palliative medicine can be complicated so please pick up the phone.