



## **Dying Process**

Dying is a process, a natural slowing down of the body's systems. This process is different for each and every individual and the duration may vary from hours to days.

You may have already noticed such changes as decreased appetite, increased weakness, withdrawal from family and friends, and increased sleepiness. As death approaches, body functions will continue to change.

### **Changes When Death Is Near**

When death is imminent, you may begin noticing some physical and mental changes, including:

- There may be changes in responsiveness. The patient may be more difficult to arouse. Even if the patient is not responding, please remember hearing may be very acute. Do continue to communicate and comfort the patient by talking to them and gently touching them.
- Usually the patient will have difficulty swallowing and may refuse liquids and/or medications.
- There may be changes in urinary function, such as incontinence (loss of bladder control) or decrease in the amount of urine.
- A temperature elevation is not unusual at this time.
- Breathing may become more irregular, labored, and noisy. This does not mean that the patient is uncomfortable or in distress.
- Arms, hands, legs and feet may become cool to touch and may take on a bluish color. This is due to slowing of circulation.

Should any of these signs occur, please notify your Arbor Hospice team. The number is on the phone and inside the notebook or folder you received during admission. Should death come quickly, again, notify your Arbor Hospice team. We are available to you at any time.

We will be monitoring these symptoms during the course of regularly scheduled visits. If you are concerned or unsure about how to manage these or other symptoms, please call your Arbor Hospice team. We will help you draw from your own resources and those available to you through Arbor Hospice to ease this difficult time. You are not alone.