Care After Death

Immediately following the death of a loved one, you may feel “numb” and may have difficulty concentrating. Many survivors often ask, “What do I do now?” At the time of death, your Arbor Hospice team is available to provide care, assist you and support you.

What Your Arbor Hospice Team May Do at the Time of Death

Please call Arbor Hospice immediately if you feel your loved one has made a change in their physical or mental condition, is in the dying process or has died. Some of the things your Arbor Hospice team may do when your loved one has died include:

- The Arbor Hospice nurse will pronounce the death. He/she will check for the absence of a pulse, heartbeat, respiration and blood pressure to determine the time of death.

- He/she will remove all tubes if needed, such as a catheter.

- Your Arbor Hospice team will bathe and dress your loved one. You may be asked if you would like to participate in the bathing. We encourage you to participate only if you are comfortable doing so. Your Arbor Hospice team will also ask you if there is any special clothing you would like your loved one dressed in. If you are planning a funeral or memorial service, the clothing for the service may be given to the funeral home at time of removal or taken to the funeral home at another time. Our chaplain is available to you at any time and can assist with funeral or memorial service planning.

- Your Arbor Hospice team will give you time alone with your loved one. Take as much time as you need to say goodbye.

- Your Arbor Hospice nurse will remove all medical supplies and call to have the medical equipment, such as a bed or wheelchair, removed that day or the following day.

- Your Arbor Hospice team will call the doctor and other hospice team members who have cared for you and your loved one to let them know about the death.
• After the death, there are often phone calls to make to family and friends. Your Arbor Hospice team may ask you if you would like them to make the phone calls or assist you with the phone calls.

• Your nurse will discuss with you the proper procedure for destroying the patient’s medication. If you have given the nurse permission to destroy the medication, he/she will ask you to witness the disposal of the medications.

• Your Arbor Hospice team may assist you with funeral arrangements if needed. If you have preplanned funeral arrangements, they will call the funeral home to remove the body when you are ready.

• When the funeral home arrives, you may choose to escort your loved one to the vehicle. This is your choice. Your Arbor Hospice team may also escort your loved one or go with you to the vehicle if you would like.

• When the removal is completed, your Arbor Hospice team may sit with you for a period of time. Please feel free to let them know when you need alone time and are ready for them to leave.

• If funeral or memorial services are planned, you may want to call or meet with the funeral director the day of the death or day after the death.

• Even after the death, your Arbor Hospice team will still stay in contact with you for a year or more. They are available to you to assist you with your grief or other concerns you may have. After the death, your Arbor Hospice nurse, psychosocial professional, chaplain and/or volunteer will contact you within a few days to see how you are doing.

• After the death of your loved one, there may be other calls to make. Some agencies, organizations, and personal services may need to know the date of your loved one’s death. In most cases, the funeral home provides death certificates and information about those organizations and agencies that need to be notified as soon as possible.

Some of these notification calls may include:

- insurance companies
- medical insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, etc.
- social security
- pension plans
Veterans administration

credit card companies

creditors

attorney

executor or estate

accountant

religious community, such as your church, synagogue, etc.

employer/former employer

clubs, fraternal organizations, professional groups

bank

investment companies

mortgage companies

government offices, including the Internal Revenue Service

Please feel free to call your Arbor Hospice team any time if you notice physical or mental changes or feel your loved one is in the dying process or has died. Please also call your Arbor Hospice team at any time after the death of your loved one. You are not alone. We are available to you if you have questions, need to talk, or have other concerns.