**Introduction**

The doctors and nurses looking after your loved one / friend, believe that the changes in their condition indicate that they are now dying and in the last days or hours of life.

**The Integrated Care Pathway**

This is a document which supports the doctors and nurses to give the very best care. This care will be reviewed on a regular basis. You and your loved one /friend will be given the support necessary to ensure that dignity and respect are always paramount, and that you feel supported. This Includes involvement in discussions regarding the plan of care, and you will be able to ask questions so that you fully understand the reasons behind decisions taken. If following discussions, you do not agree, or you are concerned about decisions made, you can ask for a second opinion. Your loved one /friends' condition will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**Comfort**

The doctors and nurses will not want to interrupt your time with your relative or friend, and they will try to ensure that as far as possible any needs are met. Please let them know if you feel those needs are not being met, for whatever reason.

You can support in this care in important ways like spending time together, sharing memories and news of friends and family.

**Communication**

The doctors and nurses will need to ask you for your contact details to ensure you are kept informed of any changes. The staff are there to answer your questions and help you through this difficult time.

**Knowing what to Expect**

Not knowing what to expect can add to your anxiety. Although no one person experiences the same features when dying, it may be useful to be aware of common features that are normally experienced.

**Reduced need for Food or Drink**

Loss of interest and a reduced need for food and drink is part of the normal dying process. This is often difficult to accept even when we know our loved one is dying. However, nutrition and hydration support will be given as is appropriate to their changing needs. Good mouth care to support the comfort of a clean and moist mouth may be something that is important to your loved one/ friend; you may wish to help them with this.

As part of this process, the bladder and bowel function will become less regular (urine often becomes darker in colour). The person may experience incontinence, the nurse can support and recommend you in this

**Changes in breathing**

There may be changes in the breathing pattern, becoming shallow, deep, fast or slow. There can often be long gaps between breaths.

Sometimes the breathing can be noisy, which is often due to mucous on the chest. Whilst this can sound noisy (and can be upsetting to you) it does not normally cause any distress to the dying patient. The doctor or nurse can discuss this with you.

**Withdrawing from the World**

Your loved one /friend may become progressively drowsy when awake, become more difficult to rouse and generally spend more time sleeping.

At times they may appear disorientated and not recognise familiar faces. This can be difficult for you but does not usually cause distress for the person as they naturally withdraw from the world.

Please speak to the staff if you have any questions or concerns no matter how busy they may seem. Caring for your loved one or friend and supporting you during this difficult time is very important to us.

**Medication**

Medication which is no longer helpful will be stopped and new medication prescribed. It will only be given at the right time and just enough to help the symptom.



What To Expect In The Last Days Of Life

Information Leaflet For Families Or Carers

GP Practice Contact Details

Email – [cmicb-cheshire.wittonstreetsurgery@nhs.net](mailto:cmicb-cheshire.wittonstreetsurgery@nhs.net)

Website - [www.wittonstreetsurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.wittonstreetsurgery.nhs.uk)

Phone – 01606 544850

Line open Mon-Fri from 8:00am – 18:30pm Mon-Fri

**For Urgent Queries Please Call Us**