

# Getting it right every time

## Fundamentals of nursing care at the end of life

### What do I need to do?

- Treat people compassionately.
- Listen to people.
- Communicate clearly and sensitively.
- Identify and meet the communication needs of each individual.
- Acknowledge pain and distress and take action.
- Recognise when someone may be entering the last few days and hours of life.
- Involve people in decisions about their care and respect their wishes.
- Keep the person who is reaching the end of their life and those important to them up to date with any changes in condition.
- Document a summary of conversations and decisions.
- Seek further advice if needed.
- Look after yourself and your colleagues and seek support if you need it.



[www.rcnendoflife.org.uk](http://www.rcnendoflife.org.uk)



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# Nutrition and hydration

There is often a reduced need for food and fluid at the end of a person's life. It is important to remember that:

- Regular individual assessment of nutrition and hydration needs is essential.
- Food and drink has physical, social, cultural and spiritual meaning in a person's life.
- Desire for food and drink may naturally decrease towards the end of life.
- Additional support may be needed with some conditions where the ability to eat and drink is lost.
- Inability to eat and drink and loss of appetite can be distressing for everyone involved.
- Preparing people for this loss of appetite can help them understand the dying process.
- A person should be supported to eat and drink for as long as they wish or are able.
- Sensitive communication may be required about why a drip may or may not be needed in the last few days of life.



**[rcneolnutritionhydration.org.uk](http://rcneolnutritionhydration.org.uk)**

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