

## WELCOME TO THE RED DEER HOSPICE



**Mission Statement:** The Red Deer Hospice Society will provide physical, social, emotional and spiritual care in a community based, home-like setting for individuals who are dying and for their loved ones.

**Our Vision:** The Red Deer Hospice Society recognizes death as a part of life's journey. Our commitment is to provide compassionate care so people can die in peace, comfort and dignity with support for them and their loved ones.

**Our Goal:** Our goal is to enhance end of life care for all who are facing this difficult time.

### COMPASSIONATE CARE AND SUPPORT

Red Deer Hospice's highly specialized, professional staff and trained volunteers are dedicated to caring for the terminally ill and improving quality of life.

Specialized licensed practical nurses and health care aides provide 24-hour nursing care. Our RN/Nurse Manager guides and supports the care provided to residents by the care-giving staff. Our trained volunteers offer spiritual support and companionship to you and your family or friends . We will welcome and work closely with your clergy.

Working together, we strive to preserve a sense of dignity and provide the specialized nursing, pain/symptom management and emotional/spiritual support that eases our residents' discomfort and prepares them and their loves ones to say good-bye.



## **RESIDENT BEDROOMS**

We hope that you will find your bedroom attractive and comfortable. Please feel free to bring your own pillow, comforter and any other personal items that will help make the space truly yours. You are welcome to hang your own special pictures in place of ours. (Please use only the existing hooks and nails.)

Each room has its own supply of bedclothes, towels, etc. All your linens, clothing and sleepwear are laundered by the staff.

Please feel free to use the washroom in your loved one's room. People staying overnight are welcome to use the walk-in shower after the staff have finished with morning resident care.

## **TELEPHONES**

Incoming calls are routed through the reception area to ensure that you are available to take your call. You may make local phone calls directly from the phone in your room. If you wish to place a long distance call please use your calling card or call collect. Staff will be happy to assist you.

## **TELEVISION**

Each resident room is equipped with a television with complementary cable connection.

## **FOOD SERVICE**

Our kitchen staff offer freshly prepared, homemade foods at every mealtime. There are always several choices of menu items and alternatives are available for residents who are able to eat very little. Please let us know if we can tempt you with something special. Family/friends may purchase meals for a nominal fee provided sufficient notice is given to the cook; we cannot always guarantee availability.

Red Deer Hospice follows a traditional mealtime schedule, but we are very aware that food cravings can occur. We will do our best to ensure that there is something for you to eat any time the desire for food arises.

Alcoholic beverages are permitted with your physician's authorization. These may be obtained for you by a family member/friend, stored at the nurses' station and must be consumed in your room.



## **VISITORS TO RED DEER HOSPICE**

### **VISITING HOURS**

There are no formal visiting hours at the Red Deer Hospice. Family and friends are encouraged to visit as often as they and the resident wish. Many residents appreciate knowing when to expect company, and we encourage family and friends to phone us at 309-4344 before visiting.

The Red Deer Hospice asks that you sign the visitor registry each time you visit, both on arrival and when you leave. The Red Deer Hospice staff reserve the right to ask any visitor exhibiting inappropriate behavior to vacate the premises.

### **FOOD SERVICES**

A kitchenette equipped with a refrigerator and microwave is available for residents and visitors who wish to bring their own snacks and beverages. Light meals may be available (with sufficient notice) at a nominal fee. Please check with the cook who will try to accommodate your needs.

### **CHILDREN**

Children of all ages are welcome to visit with their families. There is a family room with some quiet toys and a selection of videos/DVDs available for their enjoyment. We ask that young children be supervised at all times.

### **PETS**

Pets (with up-to-date immunizations) are welcome to visit. Please confirm that the timing of your intended visit is appropriate. All pets must be constantly supervised.

### **TELEPHONES**

Visitors may use the public phone that is located in the family room. Please use your calling card or call collect when making long-distance calls.

### **TELEVISIONS**

In addition to televisions in each resident's room, a large screen television is located in the Family Room and is for the use of residents and visitors. Please be considerate of others and limit the volume levels.

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

### **OXYGEN**

Residents already using oxygen may continue to use their own supplier. Residents who require oxygen after admission will be assessed by their doctor with oxygen supplies arranged through the nursing staff. All costs must be billed directly by the supplier to the resident/family.

### **NUTRITION**

We often judge how people are feeling by observing their appetites. Now we are faced with someone we love very much who is not eating. We hear the doctors and nurses use words like “terminally ill” and “dying.” All we understand is that we don’t want this person to die and we are sure that if they would only eat, things would be better. We don’t understand the nurses when they shake their heads at us when we try to force our loved one to eat. They even say “If you don’t feel like eating, then don’t try to eat now.” We see someone we love getting thinner and weaker. We are convinced that if they would only eat, they would look better, feel better and have more strength.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

It is not uncommon for a terminally ill person to stop eating. It is important to understand that when this happens, it is beyond the resident’s control. It is not by choice that they cease to eat – they simply have no desire for food, they really don’t feel hungry. Forcing them to eat can cause gastric distress resulting in increased nausea and vomiting.

Sometimes, the desire for food comes unexpectedly. When this happens, it is important that the resident be allowed to satisfy the craving as soon as possible. If forced to wait until mealtime, the desire to eat may be lost altogether.

At the Red Deer Hospice we are attuned to each resident’s needs and can generally provide something to eat whenever the resident expresses the desire for food. If a resident has been tube fed prior to admission the practice will be continued and reassessed on an ongoing basis. However, tube feeding will not be initiated after the resident has been admitted to the hospice.

## **HYDRATION**

There may come a time when a terminally ill resident has not only stopped eating but is also unable to drink. This is a frightening time and the standard hospital response is to begin IV hydration to ensure that the resident does not become dehydrated. The Red Deer Hospice does offer SC hydration as assessed on an individual basis. This measure is entirely in keeping with hospice philosophy of ensuring the resident's comfort and dignity.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Regular oral hygiene and saliva substitutes can greatly ease the discomfort of a dry mouth. Sucking on ice chips or a Popsicle also helps alleviate some discomfort and reduces dehydration.

Studies on dehydration in the terminally ill have concluded that it is not a painful condition. Furthermore, these studies show that giving excessive artificial fluids may actually contribute to edema (painful swelling of the extremities), fluid build-up in the abdomen and/or in the lungs.

There are many ethical and clinical debates surrounding the question of food and fluids in dying residents. Although there have been many articles written on both sides of the debate, it is generally agreed that the best course of action is to make the decision based on the burdens and benefits of the treatment. Those who work at the Red Deer Hospice are dedicated to giving your loved one the care and support he or she needs.

## **DAILY CARE**

Our care is tailored to the needs and deteriorating conditions of our residents. As physical conditions change it may become inappropriate to transfer the resident to the bath or get them up and dressed. We will always tend to their physical needs, but how that is done will change as comfort levels and awareness levels change. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to address them with the nursing staff or Cheri—the Nurse Manager.

---

#### REFERENCES:

The American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care, May/June 1994  
RN Magazine, January 1991

---

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **DOES THE RED DEER HOSPICE HAVE ANY SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION ?**

The hospice is a short-term facility that provides end-of-life care for those who:

1. require end-of-life care and who do not want extraordinary measures taken
2. wish to focus on comfort treatment and for whom active curative treatment has been discontinued
3. have been assessed by Hospice as to eligibility criteria

### **HOW DOES THE RED DEER HOSPICE PRIORITIZE THOSE WAITING FOR ADMISSION?**

Once it is established that an individual meets admission requirements, priority is given in this order:

1. to individuals for whom home care support services are no longer sufficient
2. to individuals in hospital
3. to situations where respite care is needed, if space is available

### **WHEN IS IT TIME TO BRING SOMEONE TO THE HOSPICE?**

It is time for the hospice when:

1. the individual is seeking end-of-life comfort care with no extraordinary measures
2. the individual and/or family cannot manage at home
3. the individual and/or family do not want hospitalization

### **CAN RESIDENTS GO OUT ON A DAY/WEEKEND PASS?**

Hospice care is based on the philosophy of comfort and quality of life. If the resident is able and the family agrees, the resident may go out. Red Deer Hospice staff will prepare sufficient medication for the duration of the outing. Overnight stays are generally discouraged but are possible if sufficient care and support are available.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF A RESIDENT'S CONDITION IMPROVES?**

On occasion a resident's condition stabilizes or improves following admission to the hospice. If this occurs, the resident may either return home until readmission becomes necessary, or be reassessed for long-term care placement.

### **WHAT IS THE COST?**

Care costs are not covered by Alberta Health Care.

There is no set fee to stay at the Red Deer Hospice and no one is ever denied care due to financial situations. However, as a not-for-profit society we depend primarily on donations and fundraising efforts in order to meet the annual operational budget of \$285/day/bed.

Please consider a donation—we rely on and appreciate all contributions made for resident care. Your donation is eligible for an income tax receipt.