

DYING AT HOME

A Few Things That Can Make the Experience Easier

A music player of some kind so the person can listen to a variety of music and guided meditations

A bedside bell so the person can feel in control and summon help

A plastic bedpan (which isn't as cold as a metal one)

Daily baths for human contact and protection against bedsores

Massages for decreasing tension and anxiety while deepening contact

Don't force someone to eat. You are sharing an openness and ease with what is. If the person wishes not to eat, so be it.

A blender is useful when one does not want to take in too much at a time.

A hot plate or electric teakettle in the person's room lets you have a cup of tea or a light snack without having to leave the room.

Water and juice should always be available

A hospital bed with side rails is convenient and comfortable, but many prefer to die in their own beds, and would rather use a foam wedge and a few extra pillows.

Pain medications should be given as the person wishes. Don't push your own ideas of how they should work with pain.

The best place for the bed may be in the living room, near the window. This lets the person maintain contact with the familiar.

It is not uncommon for people who are dying to feel that their illness may be a punishment for past actions. Supportive measures that can help dissolve the guilt should be encouraged.

You may wish to call Hospice or a home health agency in your hometown for further information and support.

"Death is not putting out the light. It is only extinguishing a lamp because the day has come."

— *Rabindranath Tagore* —

"Among the many ways of dealing with death, the one most surely doomed to failure is your attempt to ignore it."

— *Earl Grollman* —

"What the heart once owned and had, it shall never loose" — *Henry Ward Beecher* —