

Preparation

Although it is impossible to totally prepare for a death, it may be easier if you know what to expect. This information may help prepare you for this final stage of life. Death is a natural process and this resource is intended as a guide to help you understand the body's natural process of shutting down.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHEN DEATH HAS OCCURRED?

Although death is expected, you may not be prepared for the actual moment it happens.

At the time of death:

- There will be no response, no breathing and no pulse.
- The eyelids may be opened or closed. If open, the eyes will be fixed in one direction.
- There may be a release of bladder and/or bowel contents.
- The jaw may relax, leaving the mouth slightly open. Fluid may ooze from the mouth.



OUR MISSION:

Park Place Seniors Living strives to provide enriched life experiences to seniors through innovation and creativity.

OUR VISION:

At Park Place Seniors Living we are known for our unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of those we serve by providing a "voice and a choice" with dignity, respect and empathy.

Park Place Seniors Living | 1656 West 75 Ave, Vancouver
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Death of a Loved One: How to Prepare



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Signs that Death May Occur

- Some people may enter a withdrawal phase, losing interest in people and events.
- Loss of appetite and decrease in thirst are common; the body is beginning to shut down and does not need nourishment. Encouraging them to eat or drink may increase their discomfort.
- If they are unable to swallow, do not give fluids/food as they may be at risk of choking.
- Some people may sleep for long periods and become more difficult to awaken.
- As death nears, the person may slip into a coma and become unresponsive.
- Regular breathing patterns may change. You may notice shallow breathing and/or brief periods when breathing may stop. These breathing patterns are normal and indicate the natural progression towards death.
- Noisy breathing or gurgling may develop. This happens due to muscle weakness; the person is no longer able to swallow their saliva and fluid collects in their throat. This is not painful for the individual but may distress family members. Suctioning is not recommended.
- Bladder and bowel function will decrease as food and fluid intake decreases. Urine and stool may also change in colour, be passed less frequently and in smaller amounts.
- Skin may become cool; feel clammy and damp, particularly in the arms and legs. The body may become purplish (mottled) caused by the circulation of the blood slowing down.

Please take time to discuss any question(s) you have about the information in this brochure with your care team.

Reviewed by a group of Park Place Family Representatives in April 2022

After Death

AFTER DEATH HAS OCCURRED:

- This is an expected death; the staff will not call 911. This is not a medical emergency.
- This is a special time for you to express your grief and spend as much time as you need with your loved one. Do not be afraid to touch, hug, and or kiss your loved one.
- When you are ready, ask the staff to contact the funeral home.
- Your loved one's doctor will be notified and he or she will complete the medical certificate of death.
- Ask the Care Team about bereavement support services available for you.

