

What do you do when someone has died?

(Aged Residential Care Facilities)

How to know that death has occurred?

At the time of death:

- the person will not respond when you speak to them
- they will not breathe or move
- their eyes may be open or closed, and their jaw will relax
- the colour of their skin will become paler and cooler.

No matter how much you prepare for it, death arrives in its own time and in its own way.

If the person's death is expected, you don't have to do anything straight away. Take your time and collect your thoughts. When you are ready, call for assistance. The nurse will assess the person and contact the doctor.

If there is an **Advance Care Plan or guide**, the nurse will take this information into consideration.

If plans were made for organ/tissue donation, or the body to be donated

to science, the relevant people will need to be notified.

The staff will reposition the person on their back and lie them flat as soon as possible. (Note: the deceased person's body will become stiff over time, so it is important to do this sooner rather than later). It may not always be possible to close the eyes and mouth at this moment. The funeral directors will assist with this.

You may want family/whānau or friends to be with you for support and to say goodbye to the person who has died. If you choose, you, or the nurse can contact your spiritual/cultural support person.

When you are ready, the staff will wash the person (unless this is not indicated). If you would like to stay and help with this, you are very welcome. If there are any specific cultural and/or spiritual practices to be followed, please bring this to the attention of the staff. If you have any special items of clothing you wish them to wear, you are more than welcome to discuss with the nurse. (This will most probably be sent to the funeral home for the final preparation of the person).

A doctor or nurse practitioner will complete the certification of death and for cremation, if cremation is wanted-

The nurse will guide you when it is time to contact the Funeral Director and they will help you make arrangements. If you haven't chosen a Funeral Director yet, you may want to seek advice from friends and family/whānau or you may choose one from FDANZ - Funeral Directors Association New Zealand. <http://www.fdanz.org/>

(Planning a funeral pamphlet is available for more information)

You may ask the staff to help you with any other arrangements that need to be made before you leave.

Although one journey may be finishing, the journey for you will continue. As you face your loss there will be a range of support available to you.

Your GP will be the best person to approach in the first instance to put you in contact with the appropriate support available to you in your area.

Services that have been involved during the person's illness may also offer bereavement support.

(Bereavement leaflet available for more information)

If any social media accounts still need to be actioned:

E.g. Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/help/250563911970368/?helpref=hc_fnav

E.g. Google

<https://support.google.com/accounts/troubleshooter/6357590?hl=en>



What do you do when someone has died?

When someone you *love* becomes a memory... that memory becomes a *treasure*



Reviewed 01.2024 CF
Te Ara Whakapiri - Last Days of Life Care
Planning a funeral