

# Learning About the Dying Process



## What is the dying process?

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The dying process is the final stage of living. While death is a single event, the dying process is the collection of changes that happen in the mind and body as death nears. These changes may happen over weeks, days, or hours. How long the process takes can vary.

## What can you expect?

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The dying process can vary from person to person. But here are some things you may experience.

- You may feel like seeing and connecting with people. Or you may become less interested in the outside world and less social.
- You'll probably eat and drink less, or not at all. This may be because of general weakness and slowing metabolism.
- You may breathe faster or slower. Your breathing may become moist or noisy. If you feel short of breath, a doctor can prescribe medicine or other therapies so you're comfortable.
- You may become weaker, sleep more, and be harder to wake up.
- Your urine may become dark brown or dark red. And your stools may be hard and difficult to pass (constipation).
- You may notice that you can't see well.
- You may hear or see things that no one else does. Or you may be more or less alert at different times.

## How can you cope with the emotions?

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It's common to feel a lot of emotions during this time. Some people may feel angry, sad, anxious, or scared. Others may feel calm and peaceful. Your feelings may change from day to day, and even moment to moment.

Grieving is a normal part of the dying process. But talk to your doctor and family if the emotions you're feeling overwhelm you. Painful emotions can make physical pain worse. They can also make it harder to work on important relationships and say goodbye to family and friends. You don't have to sort through these emotions alone. Counseling can sometimes help. So can talking to a trusted friend or a spiritual advisor. You and your loved ones can also get emotional support through hospice care.

Many people find that, near the end of the dying process (or earlier), they actually experience feelings of peace, acceptance, or well-being.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **D123** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About the Dying Process**".

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