

The SPICT helps us to look for people who have life shortening health conditions and are less well. These people need more help and care now, and a plan for care in the future. Ask these questions:

Does this person have signs of poor health or health problems that are getting worse?

- Urgent or emergency hospital admission(s) or visits.
- Less able to manage usual activities; not as well as they used to be. (The person often stays in bed or in a chair for more than half the day).
- Needs more help and care from others due to increasing physical and/ or mental health problems. The person's carer needs more help and support.
- Has clearly lost weight over the last few months; or stays too thin.
- Has troublesome symptoms most of the time despite good treatment of their health problems.
- The person (or family) asks for palliative care; chooses to reduce, stop or not have treatment; or wishes to focus on quality of life.

Does this person have any of these health problems?

Cancer

- Less able to manage usual activities; health is getting poorer.
- Not well enough for cancer treatment or treatment is to help with symptoms.

Dementia or frailty

- Unable to dress, walk or eat without help.
- Eating and drinking less; difficulty with swallowing.
- Has poor control of bladder and bowels.
- Not able to communicate by speaking; not responding much to other people.
- Frequent falls; fractured hip.
- Frequent infections; pneumonia.

Nervous system problems

(e.g., Parkinson's disease, stroke, motor neurone disease)

- Physical and mental health are getting worse.
- More problems with speaking and communicating; swallowing is getting worse.
- Chest infections or pneumonia; breathing problems.
- Ongoing disability with increasing physical and/or mental health problems after one or more strokes.

Heart or circulation problems

- Heart failure or heart blood vessel disease. Short of breath when resting, moving or walking a few steps.
- Leg problems due to poor blood circulation; surgery is not possible.

Lung problems

- More unwell with long term lung problems. Short of breath when resting, moving or walking a few steps even when the chest is at its best.
- Needs to use oxygen for most of the day and night.
- Has needed treatment with a breathing machine in hospital.

Other conditions

- People who are less well with other life shortening physical or mental illnesses or health conditions. There is no treatment available or it will not work well.

Kidney problems

- Kidneys are not working well; general health is getting poorer.
- Stopping kidney dialysis or choosing palliative care instead of starting dialysis.

Liver problems

- Worsening liver problems in the past year with complications like:
 - fluid building up in the belly
 - being confused at times
 - kidneys not working well
 - infections
 - bleeding from the gullet
- A liver transplant is not possible.

What we can do to help this person and their family.

- Start talking with the person and their family or carer about help needed now and why making plans is important in case things change.
- Ask for help and advice from a nurse, doctor, social worker or other staff if the person or family needs a review of their care and support.
- We look at the person's medicines and other treatments to give the best care. Holistic care includes symptoms, emotional, social, financial, or spiritual problems.
- Ask for specialist help if symptoms or problems are difficult to manage.
- Care plans are shared with staff who need to see them and kept up to date.