



**HOT TIP**  
May 2017

# Northern Health Palliative Care

## End of Life in Advanced Kidney Disease

### Common Symptoms at End of Life (EOL) in End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD):

- Fatigue
- Decreased well-being
- Poor appetite
- Itching
- Pain
- Nausea
- Anxiety/Depression
- Dyspnea
- Fluid Overload
- Respiratory Congestion

Please refer to the Northern Health Symptom Management Guidelines for best practices related to the assessment, diagnosis and treatment for each individual symptom. There are also important teaching points for patients and caregivers.

### Elements of care that are important for clinicians to address with patients at EOL:

- Effective pain and symptom management
- Avoiding unwanted or inappropriate prolongation of life
- Having a sense of control over the situation
- Having minimized burdens/stress for loved ones
- Patient strengthening relationships with loved ones
- Patient dying in the location of their choice

When a decision is made to stop dialysis, deterioration of the patient can happen quite rapidly. Most patients will die within 1-2 weeks, although the time frame may be shorter or longer.

### References:

Victoria Hospice Society (2008) [Medical Care of the Dying](#)  
BC Renal Agency (2009) [End-Of-Life Framework](#)