



Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool (SPICT™)

The SPICT™ is used to help identify people whose health is deteriorating. Assess them for unmet supportive and palliative care needs. Plan care.

Look for any general indicators of poor or deteriorating health.

- Unplanned hospital admission(s).
- Performance status is poor or deteriorating, with limited reversibility. (eg. The person stays in bed or in a chair for more than half the day.)
- Depends on others for care due to increasing physical and/or mental health problems. The person's carer needs more help and support.
- Progressive weight loss; remains underweight; low muscle mass.
- Persistent symptoms despite optimal treatment of underlying condition(s).
- The person (or family) asks for palliative care; chooses to reduce, stop or not have treatment; or wishes to focus on quality of life.

Look for clinical indicators of one or multiple life-limiting conditions.

Cancer

- Functional ability deteriorating due to progressive cancer.
- Too frail for cancer treatment or treatment is for symptom control.

Dementia/ frailty

- Unable to dress, walk or eat without help.
- Eating and drinking less; difficulty with swallowing.
- Urinary and faecal incontinence.
- Not able to communicate by speaking; little social interaction.
- Frequent falls; fractured femur.
- Recurrent febrile episodes or infections; aspiration pneumonia.

Neurological disease

- Progressive deterioration in physical and/or cognitive function despite optimal therapy.
- Speech problems with increasing difficulty communicating and/or progressive difficulty with swallowing.
- Recurrent aspiration pneumonia; breathless or respiratory failure.
- Persistent paralysis after stroke with significant loss of function and ongoing disability.

Heart/ vascular disease

- Heart failure or extensive, untreatable coronary artery disease; with breathlessness or chest pain at rest or on minimal effort.
- Severe, inoperable peripheral vascular disease.

Respiratory disease

- Severe, chronic lung disease; with breathlessness at rest or on minimal effort between exacerbations.
- Persistent hypoxia needing long term oxygen therapy.
- Has needed ventilation for respiratory failure or ventilation is contraindicated.

Other conditions

- Deteriorating with other conditions, multiple conditions and/or complications that are not reversible; best available treatment has a poor outcome.

Kidney disease

- Stage 4 or 5 chronic kidney disease (eGFR < 30ml/min) with deteriorating health.
- Kidney failure complicating other life limiting conditions or treatments.
- Stopping or not starting dialysis.

Liver disease

- Cirrhosis with one or more complications in the past year:
 - diuretic resistant ascites
 - hepatic encephalopathy
 - hepatorenal syndrome
 - bacterial peritonitis
 - recurrent variceal bleeds
- Liver transplant is not possible.

Review current care and care planning.

- Review current treatment and medication to make sure the person receives optimal care; minimise polypharmacy.
- Consider referral for specialist assessment if symptoms or problems are complex and difficult to manage.
- Agree a current and future care plan with the person and their family/people close to them. Support carers.
- Plan ahead early if loss of decision-making capacity is likely.
- Record, share, and review care plans.