

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; any treatment available will have 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 ensure 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. Support carers.
- Plan ahead early if loss of decision-making capacity is likely.
- Record, share, and review care plans.

The SPICT™ helps us to look for people who are less well with one or more health problems. 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?

- Unplanned (emergency) admission(s) to hospital.
- General health is poor or getting worse; the person never quite recovers from being more unwell. (This means the person is less able to manage day to day life and often stays in bed or in a chair for more than half the day).
- Needs help from others for care 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 getting poorer.

Not well enough for cancer treatment or treatment is to help with symptoms.

Dementia/frailty

Unable to dress, walk or eat without help.

Eating and drinking less; difficulty with swallowing.

Has lost 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

(eg Parkinson's disease, MS, 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.

Severe stroke with loss of movement and ongoing disability.

Heart or circulation problems

Heart failure or has had attacks of chest pain. Short of breath when resting, moving or walking a few steps.

Very poor circulation in the legs; surgery is not possible.

Lung problems

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 the hospital.

Other conditions

People who are less well and may die from other health problems or complications. There is no treatment available or it will not work well.

Kidney problems

Kidneys not working well; general health is getting poorer.

Stopping kidney dialysis or choosing supportive 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 about any help needed now and why making plans for care is important in case things change.
- Ask for help and advice from a nurse, doctor or other professional who can assess the person and their family and help plan care.
- We can look at the person's medicines and other treatments to make sure we are giving them the best care or get advice from a specialist if problems are complicated or hard to manage.
- We need to plan early if the person might not be able to decide things in the future.
- We make a record of the care plan and share it with people who need to see it.