ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

St. Francis REFLECTIONS® Hospice
Established 1977 • Licensed 1990

HIV/AIDS (End Stage)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells), which are crucial for fighting off infections. If left untreated, HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which is the final stage of HIV infection.

Common Symptoms:

Symptoms may differ from person to person

- Persistent fatigue and weakness
- Opportunistic infections (e.g., pneumonia, fungal infections)
- Significant weight loss (wasting syndrome)
- Night sweats and fever
- Cognitive decline and confusion

Causes:

Potential causes:

- HIV/AIDS is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, which is primarily transmitted through unprotected sex, needle sharing, or from mother to child during childbirth.

Hospice Considerations:

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) can manage HIV, but once it progresses to AIDS, treatment becomes focused on symptom management and preventing infections.

- **Frequent Exacerbations:** When the patient has developed multiple opportunistic infections, severe weight loss, and a significant decline in immune function despite treatment.
- **Advanced Disease:** When antiretroviral therapies are no longer effective or desired, and the focus turns to managing symptoms and improving comfort.
- **Comfort and Quality of Life:** When the patient experiences severe complications such as chronic pain, neurological decline, or respiratory issues that limit quality of life.

ST. FRANCIS 24/7 CALL CENTER: (321) 269-4240

Symptom Management Tips:

- **Infection and Pain Management:** Use prescribed antibiotics and antifungal medications to manage infections. Take pain medications as described and report any worsening or uncontrolled pain.
- **Nutritional and Hydration Support:** Ensure adequate nutrition and hydration to support the immune system and overall health. Use supplements as needed to manage weight loss and malnutrition.
- **Emotional and Psychological Care:** Provide emotional support and counseling to address mental health concerns and improve quality of life.

How to Help:

- **Patient Tips:**
  - **Medication Adherence:** Take medications as prescribed to manage infections and symptoms.
  - **Nutrition:** Maintain a balanced diet and stay hydrated as tolerated.
  - **Comfort:** Use pain management strategies and seek support for emotional and psychological distress.
- **Caregiver Tips:**
  - **Support:** Assist with medication management and provide emotional support.
  - **Infection Control:** Help monitor for signs of infections and manage symptoms with appropriate care.
  - **Comfort Measures:** Create a comfortable environment and offer help with daily activities.

St. Francis Reflections is always available to assist with any questions or concerns 24/7

321-269-4240