End of life Care for Older People

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic presents a major risk to older people and people with complex health care needs, such as cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, frailty and dementia. Many older people will be living with more than one of these co-morbid conditions and it is the combination of a naturally weakened immune system as we age with multiple co-morbid conditions that creates the greatest vulnerability to the disease leading to higher death rates in this population.

These PowerPoint presentations and associated notes aim to support staff to provide high quality end of life care to older people with complex healthcare needs, frailty and dementia across all care settings.

They cover three key areas:

- Recognising dying
- Nutrition and hydration
- Terminal restlessness


It is also essential that you follow the Health Protection Scotland Guidance on COVID-19 relevant to your area of practice https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/

Remember

The unprecedented nature of this pandemic has led to a range of protective measures being implemented in practice across all care settings. It is important when interacting with people and their families and carers that you consider that these may be unfamiliar and quite distressing for them. For example, wearing full protective personal equipment (mask, gloves, apron, visor etc) or being prevented from visiting relatives and friends. Where possible sensitively explain what is happening in ways that the person understands, be thoughtful and try to minimise any negative reaction