The Hospice Comfort Pack: Convenient Medication Relief

People in hospice care may have symptoms such as nausea or vomiting or trouble breathing or sleeping. These symptoms can start with no warning and get worse quickly. So it is important to have medicines on hand that can give relief right away.

VNS Health provides a hospice comfort pack, also called a hospice emergency kit. The pack contains a small supply of medicines that you can use for common symptoms without having to get a prescription and wait for it to arrive. Do not use the medicines until the VNS Health hospice nurse or doctor tells you to. Your nurse will go over the medicines so you know when and how to use them.

The hospice comfort pack:

- Is delivered to the patient’s home
- Should be kept in the refrigerator
- Should not be opened or unsealed until needed
- Contains medicines that should be used only with instructions from a hospice nurse or doctor
- Is for hospice patients only. Do not let others use the medicines.

Medicines in the Pack

- Acetaminophen suppository  
  Placed in the rectum to relieve mild pain or fever
- Haloperidol (Haldol) liquid oral solution  
  Swallowed to relieve restlessness or confusion
- Atropine ophthalmic solution  
  Given under the tongue to dry secretions in the mouth and throat
- **Lorazepam (Ativan)**
  Swallowed to relieve anxiety, restlessness, or trouble sleeping

- **Morphine sulfate liquid concentrated solution (Roxanol)**
  Swallowed to relieve pain or shortness of breath

- **Prochlorperazine (Compazine) suppository**
  Placed in the rectum to relieve nausea or vomiting

- **Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) suppository**
  Placed in the rectum to relieve constipation

Some hospice patients may receive other medicines. For example, a person at risk for seizures may get an antiseizure medicine. Pain medicines such as opiates can cause constipation, so patients on these medicines may get additional laxatives or enemas. The hospice nurse will work with you and your loved one to be sure that the pack contains the right medicines.