

# Terminal Agitation



## What is terminal agitation?

Terminal agitation is an end of life syndrome in which patients experience signs of physical and emotional distress, anxiety, agitation, and cognitive decline in the days leading up to death. Sudden manifestation of symptoms is common. This process is normal and is usually followed by a period of somnolence and decreased responsiveness.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Aggression or anger
- Discomfort
- Fidgeting, picking, reaching in the air
- Hallucinations, talking to someone unseen
- Restlessness, trying to get out of bed

## Management

- Presence of family or loved ones
- Reassurance
- Distraction
- Maintain calm environment, soothing music, low lights
- Avoid restraint
- Maintain safety
- Avoid asking questions

## Treatment

- Lorazepam or Haldol as ordered, may be given with

morphine\_\_\_\_\_

- Comfort measures\_\_\_\_\_

## What should I communicate to the hospice team?

- Any signs/symptoms listed above, especially if symptoms are difficult to control
- Inability to administer recommended medications
- Unsafe situations
- Need for emotional or spiritual support

If you need help with your symptoms, call VNA 24hrs a day:

**214-689-0000**