



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Suicidal Thoughts in a Family Member: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Most people who think about suicide don't want to die. They think suicide will solve their problems and end their pain. People who consider suicide often feel hopeless, helpless, and worthless. These ideas can make a person feel that there is no other choice.

If a person talks about suicide or about wanting to die or disappear, take him or her seriously. Do this even if the person says it in a joking way. If you feel that a family member may be thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to talk to him or her about it. After you know what the person is thinking, you may be able to help.

Follow-up care is a key part of your family member's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your family member is having problems.

How can you care for your loved one at home?

- Encourage your loved one not to drink alcohol. Tell your loved one's doctor if he or she needs help to quit. Counseling, support groups, and sometimes medicines can help your loved one stay sober.
- Ask your loved one not to take any medicines unless his or her doctor says to take it.
- Talk to the person often so you know how he or she feels.
- Encourage the person to go to counseling. You could offer your help for getting to and from the sessions. You can even offer to go to the sessions if that will make him or her more likely to go.
- Talk to other family members. Make a schedule so that someone is always with the person who is thinking about suicide.

Suicidal Thoughts in a Family Member: Care Instructions (Page 2 of 3)

- Put away sharp or dangerous objects. Make sure there are no guns in the house. Also remove medicines that are not being used.
- Keep the numbers for these national suicide hotlines: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) and 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433).
- Check in with your family member often. Find out if he or she has made a plan for suicide or has figured out how to carry out a plan.

If a person has a plan for suicide and a way to carry out that plan, follow these steps:

- Make sure you are safe.
- Stay with the person (or ask someone you trust to stay with the person) until the crisis has passed.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help.
- Do not argue with the person ("It is not as bad as you think"). And don't challenge the person ("You are not the type to attempt suicide").
- Show understanding and compassion. Tell the person that you do not want him or her to die (or to harm another person). Talk about the situation as openly as you can.
- Call 911 (or the police, if 911 is not available) to stop the person from carrying out the threat.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think your loved one may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Someone you know is about to attempt or is attempting suicide.
- Your family member feels that he or she cannot stop from hurting himself or herself or someone else.

Call the doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your family member has one or more warning signs of suicide. For example, call if the person:
 - Starts to give away his or her possessions.
 - Uses illegal drugs or drinks alcohol heavily.
 - Talks or writes about death. This may include writing suicide notes and talking about guns, knives, or pills.
 - Starts to spend a lot of time alone or spends more time alone than usual.
 - Acts very aggressively or suddenly appears calm.

Suicidal Thoughts in a Family Member: Care Instructions (Page 3 of 3)

- Your family member hears voices.
- Your family member seems more depressed than usual.

Watch closely for changes in your family member's health, and be sure to contact the doctor if you have any questions.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>.

Enter **F411** in the search box to learn more about "**Suicidal Thoughts in a Family Member: Care Instructions.**"

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