

As eloquently explained by Dr Kathryn Mannix, UK Pall care physician

What is the usual pattern of a person who is dying?
While unpredictable, there are similar patterns of event.

- people become more tired
- it gets harder and harder for people to find the energy to do things
- they recharge their energy not so much by eating and drinking, but by sleeping
- as time goes by people sleep more and are awake less
- they start to choose to use their energy on the things important to them
- as they sleep more, they start to sleep deeper and actually become unconscious and at times are much more difficult to wake
- when people do wake for periods they often tell us they have had a good sleep and don't really recognise they have been unconscious
- when people are deeply unconscious, the only part of the brain that is really still working is the part which controls our breathing but over time we see some of these breathing cycles change resulting in periods of apnoea or irregularity and changes in depth of breathing, changes in noise with groaning or sighing as air passes over the voice box.
- the person becomes unaware of their throat and the need to clear it with a gentle cough resulting in increased noisy breathing "rattle". That rattle is the flow of air over a pool of fluid at the back of the throat which is not obstructing but bubbling with the flow of air. This can be distressing to families so it is really important to normalise these processes and explain to family why these things are occurring.
- then in one of those periods of more shallow breathing, there will be a breath out that just isn't followed by another breath in.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_mannix_what_happens_as_we_die_feb_2023?subtitle=en