

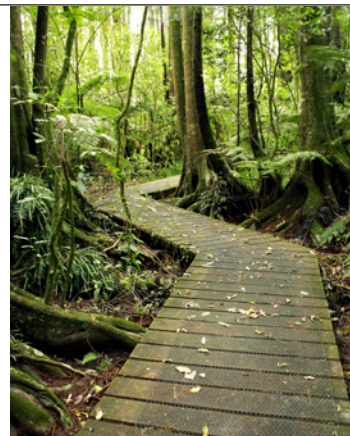
Medical Assistance In Dying

Considering your options

Seeking medical assistance in dying is a deeply personal decision. You are encouraged to discuss your wishes with your family members, loved ones and/ or anyone else who can support you.

It is normal to have questions. It is important to note that not every person who inquires about medical assistance in dying will be eligible. Regardless of your decision to pursue an assisted death, we encourage all patients to explore all appropriate care options to address their suffering.

Whatever you decide, your health care team is here to work with you through this process and to honour and respect your wishes. Please see the contact information for the Assisted Dying Program information at the end of this pamphlet.



What is it?

Medical assistance in dying is a process whereby a doctor or nurse practitioner helps a patient who voluntarily and intentionally requests to end their life. As of June, 2016 medical assistance in dying (MAID) is now legal in Canada (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>)

and is governed under federal law. This law sets out the eligibility requirements, safeguards, and processes concerning assessments for and provision of medical assistance in dying.

Who is eligible?

To receive medical assistance in dying, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Be eligible for publicly-funded health services in Canada,
- Request assistance without pressure or influence from anyone else,
- Be able to provide capable informed consent when assessed, and at the final moment when medical assistance in dying is to be provided,
- Have a grievous and irremediable medical condition (illness, disease or disability),
- Be suffering intolerably from this condition,
- Be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed,
- Be at the point with your condition where natural death is reasonably foreseeable.

If you believe you meet these criteria and want to find out more, please talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner, or call the Assisted Dying Program. You can also ask any member of your care team to bring your request to the attention of your doctor or nurse practitioner or the Assisted Dying Program.

Please understand that individual doctors and nurse practitioners are not obligated to assess or provide medical assistance in dying if they do not personally agree with it, but they are expected to connect you with other care providers or the Assisted Dying Program who can help you explore your request.

Process

If you wish to proceed with a request for medical assistance in dying it is important and advised - but not a requirement - that you talk with your own doctor or nurse practitioner who can discuss your medical condition and all the services or treatments that are available to you. Treatment options may include comfort care, pain control, hospice care, palliative care or other options.

You are not required to accept any of these services, but it is our responsibility to ensure that you know about them before you pursue medical assistance in dying. Should you choose to submit a documented request for medical assistance in dying, please know you can pause or even stop the process at any time.

Step 1 – Patient Request Record

If you wish to be assessed for eligibility you must complete and submit a Patient Request Record to the Assisted Dying Program or to your doctor or nurse practitioner. By signing this form, you are formally asking to be assessed for medical assistance in dying and stating that you believe you meet the criteria and consenting to two independent assessments to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria. You can get this form from your medical team, the Assisted Dying Program, or by Patient Request Record link at vch.ca/assisted-dying. You may pause or withdraw your request at any time.

Step 2 – Release of Information

One part of the request form document's your understanding and agreement for your care team to share information about your health condition with the doctors or nurse practitioners involved in your assessment, to help them determine whether you are eligible.

Step 3 – Assessments

Your medical team or the Assisted Dying Program will arrange two assessments by doctors or nurse practitioners. The Assessment process ensures that you are aware of other options to alleviate your suffering, that you meet the criteria for medical assistance in dying and that you are capable to make this important decision.

Two different medical professionals (doctors and/ or nurse practitioners) must each do separate assessments. If they are not sure whether you are capable of making the decision, a medical professional with expertise in capability assessment may also be consulted. Please be aware that, if one assessor finds you ineligible you may ask for another assessment by another medical professional.

If the assessments confirm that you are eligible for medical assistance in dying, federal law requires a 10 day 'period of reflection' before medical assistance in dying can take place. This period begins the day after you complete the Patient Request Record. The waiting period can be shortened in certain circumstances. You and your assessors for medical assistance in dying can make this decision together.

Step 4 - Provision (The Procedure)

If the assessors agree that you are eligible you may decide when and where medical assistance in dying will take place. You may not wish to make immediate plans and instead contact us at a future date when you are ready. You can talk more about this with the assessors.

You may choose to receive medical assistance in dying in your own home or, if you are in hospital, hospice, or residential care facility in that setting. Some faith-based settings have restrictions on provision and assessments, so you may need to move to another location.

You can decide which family or friends are with you when medical assistance in dying is provided.

While planning for Provision

You will need to make arrangements in advance with a funeral home. It is also important to contact your life insurance company to clarify if your insurance may be affected by receiving medical assistance in dying.

Other end of life options

More information about end of life options such as palliative care can be found on the VCH website, or the Government of British Columbia website - search "Palliative Care".

You can also ask your family doctor, nurse practitioner or community health nurse for more information.

For more information about medical assistance in dying, visit:

Vancouver Coastal Health: www.vch.ca/assisted-dying

Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>

For further discussion, you or your doctor or nurse practitioner may contact VCH:

Phone: 1-844-550-5556

Email: assisteddying@vch.ca



Making better
decisions together
with patients
and families

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