

# Getting More Information

## Getting information

Speaking with your family, loved ones, and healthcare team is important when thinking about your end-of-life options. You might want to talk about your end-of-life needs, wishes, and values.

The next step is to find out more about the end-of-life options available to you. This will help you make choices that fit into your end-of-life values. Information about end-of-life options other than medical assistance in dying can be found in the first resource titled *Medical Assistance in Dying—What Are My Options?*

Alberta Health Services (AHS) respects your right to make choices about your care options which reflect your values and wishes. This includes the right to consent to, withdraw from, and refuse healthcare.

## What is medical assistance in dying?

Medical assistance in dying is a relatively new healthcare option available to Albertans at the end-of-life. It allows a capable adult suffering from a grievous and irremediable medical condition to voluntarily request medicine that will bring about their death.

There are five stages of medical assistance in dying:

- **Pre-contemplation** (looking at and thinking about end-of-life care options)
- **Contemplation** (getting information about end-of-life care options)
- **Determination** (assessment of eligibility and formal request for medical assistance in dying)
- **Action** (confirming the request and patient death)
- **Care after death** (grief support)

You might move back and forth between the stages or choose not to proceed at any point.

To qualify for this service, you must meet all of the eligibility criteria set out by federal law. Information about this law can be found at [ahs.ca/maid](https://ahs.ca/maid).

This information sheet is the second in a series of three about medical assistance in dying. It talks about how to get more information about medical assistance in dying.

Information about requesting medical assistance in dying can be found in the resource:

- *Medical Assistance in Dying—Eligibility and Planning.*



## Am I eligible for medical assistance in dying?

The law states you must meet all of the medical mandatory conditions listed below to be eligible for medical assistance in dying.

1. You are at least 18 years of age and have the capacity to provide informed consent.
2. You are eligible for public health services in Canada (existing waiting periods or minimum residency requirements do not apply).
3. You have a grievous and irremediable medical condition. All of the following criteria are required:
  - a. you have a serious and incurable illness, disease or disability;
  - b. you are in an advanced state of irreversible decline in capability;
  - c. that illness, disease, disability or state of decline causes enduring physical or psychological suffering that:
    - c is intolerable to you; and
    - c cannot be relieved under conditions or with treatment that you consider acceptable; and
4. Your natural death has become reasonably foreseeable, taking into account all of your medical circumstances. A prognosis as to the specific length of time remaining is not required.

Other mandatory criteria include:

- Your request for medical assistance in dying is voluntary and made using the required form;
- You provide informed consent for medical assistance in dying after being informed of the means available to relieve your suffering.

Seeing if you are eligible is an important first step. Your doctor, nurse practitioner, or the Care Coordination Service can give you more information about whether or not you are eligible.

If you lose your ability to make decisions, you won't be eligible for medical assistance in dying at that time. You can still access palliative care and other end-of-life services.

If you regain your ability to make decisions, medical assistance in dying can be provided so long as you can give express consent that you wish to continue, and you have capacity at the time that medical assistance in dying is provided.



## Care Coordination Service

AHS has put together a Care Coordination Service made up of doctors, nurses, and other members of this healthcare team. The team can be reached through Health Link at 811 or by email at [MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca](mailto:MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca).

The Care Coordination Service will answer your questions about medical assistance in dying. The team can also give you information on other end-of-life choices. This team has access to and can connect you with other special teams who focus on palliative care, pain control and symptom management, and cancer care. AHS knows end-of-life choices are different for each person, and we will respect your decisions. You can change your mind at any time and at any point.

## What do I do next?

After looking at your end-of-life options, you might want to move to the determination phase. This means you have given much thought to your end-of-life choices and are considering the next steps for medical assistance in dying. The determination phase includes two assessments of your eligibility to receive medical assistance in dying and your formal request for medical assistance in dying.

The next steps are outlined in the resource titled *Medical Assistance in Dying—Eligibility and Planning*.

## Respect and dignity

You can change your mind about your end-of-life choices including medical assistance in dying at any time. AHS is committed to supporting your informed healthcare decisions. This means your right to consent to, withdraw from, and refuse healthcare will be respected. AHS is also committed to ensuring your dignity is maintained regardless of your choices, and providing you with our support through your journey.

## For further information

Care Coordination Service:

[MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca](mailto:MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca)

Web: [ahs.ca/maid](http://ahs.ca/maid)



**For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.**



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