

Medical aid in dying

Making a contemporaneous request



This health sheet relates to medical aid in dying when it is desired in the near future. It describes what this care consists of, as well as the conditions and steps to be followed to receive it.

For information on **advance requests** for medical aid in dying, consult the Useful Resources section on page 2.

Members of your care team are there to answer your questions and support you in your reflection and choices.

What is medical aid in dying?

In Quebec, this is care provided by a doctor or a specialized nurse practitioner. It consists of administering medications to a person, at the person's request, with a view to relieving his or her suffering by inducing death. It's an act governed by provincial and federal laws.

Who can receive it?

The law sets out the conditions that a person must satisfy to receive medical aid in dying. All must be met. Here are those that apply in Québec:

- Be insured in accordance with the *Health Insurance Act*.
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be capable of giving consent to care, that is, be able to understand the situation and the information provided by health professionals, as well as to make decisions.

- Be in one of the following situations:
 - Suffering from a serious and incurable disease and having a medical status characterized by an advanced and irreversible decline in one's capacities.
 - Having a serious physical disability that results in significant and persistent (permanent) incapacities.
- Experience constant and unbearable physical or psychological suffering that cannot be relieved under conditions that the person deems tolerable.

Throughout the process, professionals **will assess whether you meet these conditions**.

If any one of these conditions is not met, your request will be denied. You'll be able to make a new request if your situation changes. You will continue to receive appropriate care.



What are the steps to request it?

Please note that you can stop your request at any step.

1 Request for information

This involves asking a member of your healthcare team for information about medical aid in dying. It could be a doctor, a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist, or a pharmacist. That person will answer your questions about the process. He or she will also inform you about the options for care and services that are available to you.

The purpose of this first step is for you to get information and clarify your wishes. **It does not commit you in any way.**

2 Written request

If you decide to make an official request, there is form to be completed. You must sign and date it in the presence of a health or social services professional and an independent witness.

You must make the request **yourself, in a free and informed manner**. This means:

- without pressure from your friends and family or from the healthcare staff
- after being given all the information you need to make your decision



3 Medical assessment

This assessment is done by 2 evaluators. Each of them must conclude that you qualify for medical aid in dying, in line with the conditions stated in the law. To do this, they can ask for opinions from other doctors or health professionals.

4 Preparation

If your request for medical aid in dying is accepted, your care team will help you to prepare. You'll be able to set a date with the doctor who will perform the care. You'll also be able to choose how you want it to unfold: in what place, with what loved ones and what rituals, etc. During this step, your wish to receive medical aid in dying will be re-verified.

5 On the day

The doctor or specialized nurse practitioner will ask you one last time to confirm that you want to receive medical aid in dying. Once you've given your consent, the doctor will first give you medications that will put you to sleep, followed by those that result in stopping your vital functions. He or she will stay with you until you have died. Your loved ones can also stay with you, if you wish.

If there is a risk that you might not be capable of giving final consent on the day of care, an arrangement can be made in advance to allow you to receive it anyway.

IMPORTANT

Depending on your health situation, life expectancy, and legal requirements, the time between when the assessment of your request begins and when you receive the care can be anywhere from a few days to more than 90 days. Your care team will tell you what time frame you can expect in your case.



USEFUL RESOURCES

For information on advance requests for medical assistance in dying:

quebec.ca/en/

Type "advance request for MAiD" in the search bar

The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca