

Medical aid in dying

Without being at the end of life



Medical aid in dying can sometimes be given to a person who is not at the end of life but who is seriously ill. Here is what you need to know in this situation before requesting this final care.

To learn about all the admission criteria and the usual steps for requesting it, read the health fact sheet [Medical Aid in Dying - Understanding the steps involved](#).

Are there any differences in the steps for making the request when death is not expected?

Yes, there are some important differences to be aware of, which relate to:

- the preparation of the request
- the time frame for medical assessment
- the final consent

The preparation of the request

The preparation stage becomes even more important. **Before making a request**, you need to be sure you're fully informed about the different care and service options. Some might improve your quality of life to the point where your decision could change.

Tell your care team that you're thinking of asking for medical aid in dying. They can:

- **Help you to find out if there are other treatments, interventions, services, or community supports that could help you.** For example, they might advise you to see another specialist for a second opinion, or to participate in a study to try a new medication.
- Review with you all the information you've received and make sure you understand it.

Then, you should:

Take time to **think about the different options** your care team has proposed and, ideally, talk these over with your loved ones.

Consult the personal decision guide suggested in the Useful Resources section at the end of this fact sheet to help you make important decisions about your care.





The time frame for medical assessment

If you decide to apply for medical aid in dying, the medical assessment takes **at least 90 days**. This time is not counted from the day you sign the application, but rather, from the first assessment done following your application. This time frame is required by law. It allows for a proper assessment of your application.

For this assessment, you may be asked to meet with other doctors or health care professionals. This time frame is longer than if you were at the end of life.

The final consent

You'll need to give your consent on the day the final care is administered. This means you must be capable of consenting until the end of the process. A loved one cannot do it for you.

If you're hospitalized

If you apply for medical aid in dying while you're in the hospital, this doesn't allow you to stay there for the duration of the assessment.

As soon as you no longer need specialized care, you'll have to return home (or to another living environment). Every effort will be made to make this transition as smooth as possible and to ensure you receive the care and services you need. You'll still have appointments at the hospital to follow up on your request for medical aid in dying.

What happens if my request is refused?

Your application may not meet all the specific requirements of the law. If this is the case, you can reapply, if you wish, when your health status changes. Your care team will continue to care for you as before.

If the refusal is very difficult to accept, or if you're thinking about suicide, talk to your care team or another trusted person.

What support can I get?

A process like this is very emotional. The members of your care team are there to support you and listen to you. Bring your questions to them.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Ottawa Personal Decision Guides:
The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute.
> ohri.ca

Click on For Patients → At the bottom of the page, under Additional resources, click on Decision aids for patients → In the menu on the left, under Patient Decision Aids, click on For any decision

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

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