

Preparing to receive medical aid in dying



Your contemporaneous request for medical aid in dying has been accepted. The approach of death, when you know the exact moment, can create all kinds of emotions. This fact sheet will help you live your last moments well.

How is the date chosen?

Once your contemporaneous request for medical aid in dying has been accepted, you can decide on a date with your doctor or specialized nurse practitioner. Take the time to think it over carefully. You're advised to talk about it with your loved ones. This can help you make an informed choice and create a calm atmosphere.

It's normal to feel uncertain, to hesitate between the wish to end your suffering and the desire to live a little longer.

Here are some questions that may help you in your decision:

- Do I have enough information and support to choose the date?
- Will my pain and other symptoms be well relieved until the date I have in mind? If not, can they be relieved by other means?
- How will my loved ones react to my decision? Who can help them?
- What is most important to me? And to my loved ones?
- Are there any projects I would like to do or complete? How can I make them happen?
- Once the date has been chosen, how can I live the time I have left with serenity?

Where will I stay until the scheduled time?

If your condition doesn't require hospitalization, you'll remain at home or in another living environment until the date you choose.

On that day, medical aid in dying will be administered to you in the place of your choice. To receive it at home, you need to request it from your care team in advance. You will then be directed to your CLSC.

What is an end-of-life ritual?

It's a time when you and your loved ones come together and experience the emotions you're feeling as your death approaches.

It can take several forms:

- Reading thoughts, prayers, or texts that have meaning for you
- Listening to music that's linked to memories or that helps you to reflect
- Access to meaningful objects or photos related to happy memories
- Sharing a favorite food and drink
- Testimonials

This ritual, whether spiritual or religious, brings peace to the end of life and facilitates final conversations with loved ones. Talk it over with them. Spiritual care workers and nurses can also help you prepare this ritual.

Depending on your wishes and those of your loved ones, it can be conducted in the days before the date chosen for medical aid in dying or on the day that it's administered.

How can I prepare my parting words?

Words exchanged at the end of life are precious. As we approach death, we often seek to express important feelings. For some people, it can be soothing to talk about relationships, memories, or unfinished business. Everyone experiences the end of life in their own way.

You and your loved ones can always count on your care team to support and accompany you. It's also possible to see a psychologist, a social worker, and a spiritual advisor.

How will the final hours play out?

The final hours are a time for reflection. Allow enough time beforehand to do whatever rituals you wish to do.

If you're feeling very stressed during the final hours, you can ask to be given medication to calm you down. You can also receive the medication prescribed for your pain at any time.

Before administering medical aid in dying, the doctor or specialized nurse practitioner will ask you one last time to confirm that you wish to receive it. At any time, you can ask to have it postponed.

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

How will the medical aid in dying be administered?

After obtaining your consent, the doctor or specialized nurse practitioner will first give you medication to relax you, then other medications to put you to sleep. Once you're asleep, the doctor will give you the drugs that stop your vital functions. You'll have no pain or discomfort. Your death will be peaceful.

The professional will stay at your bedside until your death. Your loved ones may also stay if you wish.

Who can I consult if I have questions?

Discuss them with the professionals who are supporting you in your process.

A volunteer can accompany you in the days before, if you're in the hospital. That person's presence, listening, and support can help. Talk about it with your care team. They'll make a request for a volunteer to visit you.



USEFUL RESOURCES

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

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