



Contemporaneous request for medical assistance in dying

Make better choices with better understanding

Considering medical assistance in dying is a profoundly personal undertaking which may evoke significant emotions and questions. This guide was created with respect and good will to support you and those close to you by providing you with the essential information to help you make a well informed decision.

Definition

Medical assistance in dying is a procedure provided by a competent professional to an individual who has requested it.

This procedure consists of administering medications that will induce the end of life in order to end unbearable suffering.

It is strictly regulated by the Act Respecting End-of-Life Care and by the Criminal Code to ensure your safety and to protect your freedom of choice for this procedure.

There are two ways for a person seeking medical assistance in dying to make a request:

1. Contemporaneous request: receive medical assistance in dying, when a person is still able to make the request and would like to receive this procedure in the short term.
2. Advance request: receive medical assistance in dying later when the illness will prevent a person from making this decision themselves (only certain specific illnesses).

This brochure explains a contemporaneous request.

For further information on advance request:



<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-system-and-services/end-of-life-care/medical-aid-in-dying/advance-request-medical-aid-dying>

Conditions

To access contemporaneous medical assistance in dying, a person must meet **all** the following conditions:

- be registered with the Quebec health care plan (RAMQ);
- be 18 years of age or older;
- be able to consent to care;
- be suffering from a serious and incurable illness and be in a medical state of advanced and irreversible decline in capability;
or
- have a serious physical impairment causing significant and persistent disability;
- experience lasting and unbearable physical or psychological suffering which cannot be alleviated under conditions that the person considers tolerable.

Support from our team

When your health problems cause you to suffer, your healthcare team will be there to assist you. They will respect your values and choices to keep you as comfortable as possible.

You can always ask questions. The team is there to support and guide you and also help those close to you.

If the situation is difficult, you can ask to speak to a social worker or a spiritual care provider. They are there to help you think things through.

Medical assistance in dying in five steps

1 Request for information

- This step is intended to provide information and clarify your wishes. You are not committing to anything.
- Start by discussing the various options in palliative care and end-of-life care (such as palliative sedation, medical assistance in dying or something else) with your healthcare team. Do not hesitate to ask all your questions. It is a good time to talk about managing symptoms or fears.
- Understand that no one can dismiss a discussion around a request for medical aid in dying but it is possible that some professionals may be less comfortable with it. If this is the case, the professional will ask a colleague to follow up with you.
- Start thinking about the time and place where you would like to receive this procedure. These ideas will help you with the next step.

2

Written request

- You must submit your request for medical assistance in dying by completing an official form provided by a healthcare professional. You must make this request freely after receiving all the necessary information and without pressure from those close to you or healthcare personnel.
- Sign and date the form **in the presence** of a healthcare professional and an independent witness who will be assigned by your healthcare team.
- If you are unable to sign due to a physical disability or because you do not know how to write, another person who fulfils certain criteria will be able to sign for you.
- Ensure that your documents are legal, for example, that your will and advance medical directives or a protection mandate in case of incapacity are completed according to your wishes to facilitate planning for your care.

3

Medical assessment

- At this step, two different competent professionals will assess your request separately to confirm that you meet the necessary conditions.
- Please note that the term competent professional means a specialized doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Each competent professional will discuss and assess with you whether your situation meets the required criteria outlined in the Act Respecting End-of-Life Care and the Criminal Code.
- If one of the professionals decides you are not admissible, your request will be refused and the process stopped. You will be able to make a new request if you want.
- If your request is accepted by both competent professionals, a psychosocial facilitator may meet with you to offer you and your loved ones support.
- Your healthcare team will continue to care for you whatever your decision.

4 Preparation

- The competent professional, who will provide end-of-life care, and your healthcare team will plan – and those close to you if you want them involved – the procedure process with you: date, time, place, presence of loved ones, rituals, wishes, etc.
- If the professional thinks you could lose the ability to decide in the interim, they may suggest signing another form. This document confirms that you agree to receive the procedure, even if, later on, you cannot give the consent yourself.
- The day before or several hours before, your healthcare team will install two catheters for administering the medications.

Good to know

At any time, you can change your mind and withdraw your request for medical assistance in dying or postpone the date.

Organ, tissue or body donation to science

If you would like to make a donation, it is important to tell your healthcare team. For more information on the various possible donations, consult:

Blood, tissue and organ donation



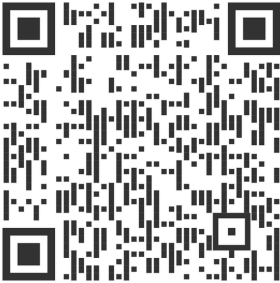
<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/don-de-sang-de-tissus-et-d-organes>

5 On the day

- Your wishes for this day will be respected as much as possible by your healthcare team.
- If you would like, those close to you will be invited to be present during the process.
- When the time comes, the competent professional will ask you again if you still wish to receive medical assistance in dying. On receiving your consent and being sure that you are ready, they will start administering the medications.
- The competent professional will administer the medications that will end your life.
- The procedure will not cause pain. Your loved ones can remain with you after you have died.
- A bereavement kit including a list of support resources and references on bereavement will be available for your loved ones.

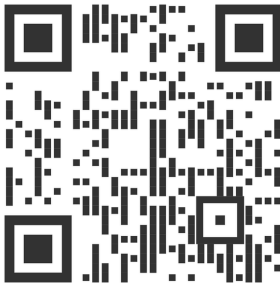
For further information

Act respecting end-of-life care



<https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/s-32.0001?langCont=en>

Advance care planning



<https://www.advancecareplanning.ca>

End-of-life care



https://bibliosante.ca/fr/information_sante/soins-de-fin-de-vie.php (only in French)

Support for caregivers

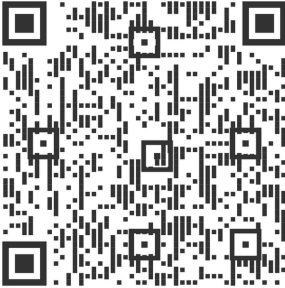
Appui proches aidants



<https://www.lappui.org/en/practical-advices/navigating-the-administrative-process/end-of-life/helping-the-person-i-am-caring-for-with-their-request-for-medical-aid-in-dying/>

Support for children

Medical assistance in dying – how to properly support young people?



<https://deuil-jeunesse.com/app/uploads/2024/05/Laide-medicale-a-mourir-Comment-bien-accompagner-les-jeunes.pdf> (only in French)

Medical assistance in dying – Activity book



<https://kidsrief.ca/local/staticpage/pdf/ACTIVITYBOOK.pdf>



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