

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD): Information for Patients and Families

What is Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)?

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) is a procedure in which a patient is given medications to intentionally and safely end their life. Federal law Bill C-14 governs who is eligible for MAiD, and the processes under which a patient can receive it.

Who is eligible to receive MAiD?

To be eligible for MAiD under federal law:

- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- You must be eligible for publicly funded health care in Canada.
- You must be capable of making your own health-care decisions.
- You must have all the information you need to make informed decisions about:
 - Your medical diagnoses.
 - Available forms of treatment.
 - Available options to relieve suffering, including palliative care.
- You must have a serious and incurable illness, disease, or disability.
- You must be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed.
- You must be feeling that the physical or mental pain from your condition is unbearable, and cannot be helped in a way that is acceptable to you.
- Your natural death must be reasonably expected, considering all of your medical conditions.
- You must make a voluntary, written request for MAiD. You must do this willingly, without pressure or influence from other people.

What does it mean to be capable?

To be capable of making decisions about your health you must:

- Understand and remember information needed to make decisions about your medical treatment.
- Appreciate what could happen because of your decisions.

Your medical condition can change very quickly. This can cause you to lose your ability to make decisions. If this happens, you will not be able to receive MAiD.

Can I write down my request for MAiD in case I lose the ability to make decisions?

No. You must be able to ask for MAiD at the time of the request. It cannot be written down ahead of time.

Can family members make the decision for me?

No. Only you can make this decision.

I think I am eligible for MAiD. What does the process involve?

To receive MAiD, you must follow a series of steps. MAiD is not a last-minute or rushed process. It can take several days or weeks to go through the steps. If it is expected that you will die very soon, there may be other end-of-life care options more appropriate for you.

Step 1: Written Request

You must make a written request for MAiD. Your signature must be witnessed by two people, who must sign the document at the same time as you.

People have to meet certain conditions to be witnesses:

- They must be 18 years of age or older.
- They cannot be named in your will.
- They cannot benefit from your death financially or materially.
- They cannot own or operate the health-care facility where you live or are being treated.
- They cannot be providing personal or health care services to you.

You can access the [Ontario Ministry of Health MAiD written request form](#).

Step 2: Assessments of Eligibility

You will have at least two independent assessments to see if you meet the legal criteria for MAiD. The doctor or nurse who usually looks after you and knows your history and situation may be able to do one of the assessments.

Both assessors must agree that you are eligible to receive MAiD. Each assessment can take up to 1-2 hours.

The assessment includes:

- A review of your medical history and your current medical situation.
- An assessment of your ability to make decisions.
- A review of your current medications.
- A limited physical examination.
- A detailed explanation of the MAiD medications and procedure.
- An opportunity to answer any questions or concerns you or your family may have.
- Signing a consent form to receive MAiD.

Step 3: A Period of Reflection

The law requires that at least 10 days pass between when you sign your written request and when MAiD occurs. For example, if you sign the request form on November 1, then the first possible day you could receive MAiD would be November 12. MAiD can also occur after this date. Under very specific circumstances this period may be shortened if both assessors agree that it is necessary.

Step 4: Provision of MAiD

If you are found to be eligible for MAiD and decide to proceed, your MAiD team will create a detailed plan with you. This will include the date, location, who will be present, and any special arrangements that are required.

Can I change my mind about receiving MAiD?

Yes. You can change your mind at any time, for any reason.

Simply tell your doctor, nurse, or a member the Champlain MAiD Network that you do not wish to continue with MAiD. We will discuss the other compassionate, high-quality care options available to you.

Do I have to undergo treatment first?

No, you do not have to undergo treatment before requesting MAiD.

What if my health-care provider objects to MAiD?

Health-care providers have the right to refuse to participate in MAiD based on their personal beliefs. In this case they have a legal duty to provide you with a timely referral to someone who can help you access MAiD.

What else is involved?

In Ontario, the Office of the Chief Coroner must be notified of all MAiD cases and will be contacted just after MAiD has occurred. In most cases a representative from the coroner's office will ask to speak to a member of your family at this time.

Is there a fee associated with this service?

No. If you have provincial health-care coverage, then the costs of the assessments, medication and procedure are fully covered.

If I choose MAiD, will it affect my life insurance?

No. MAiD will not affect life insurance or pensions.

What if I am not eligible?

If you are not eligible for MAiD, you will continue to be supported with the compassionate care that you require.

What if I have other questions?

If you have questions, please discuss them with your doctor, nurse practitioner or with a member of your health-care team.

For more information about MAiD, contact The Champlain Regional MAiD Network: maid@toh.ca