

# How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

Comment accéder à l'aide médicale à mourir au Canada

**Provincial Resources / Ressources provinciales**

Information compiled by / Information compilée par



Last reviewed on June 7, 2023

# How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

## Table of Contents

<b>Federal Guidelines</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Requesting the service</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Procedural Safeguards - All Requests for MAID</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Undergo medical assessments</i> .....	4
<i>Submit a signed written request for MAID</i> .....	4
<b>Independent Witness</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Withdrawal of your request</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Final Consent</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Waiver of Final Consent</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Waiver of final consent if you choose MAID by self-administration</i> .....	6
<b>Procedural Safeguards – Requests where your natural death is not reasonably foreseeable:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Useful links across Canada</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Yukon</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Northwest Territories</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Nunavut</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>British Columbia</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Alberta</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Manitoba</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Saskatchewan</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Ontario</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Quebec</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>New Brunswick</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Prince Edward Island</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Nova Scotia</b> .....	<b>9</b>

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### Federal Guidelines

FRANÇAIS : [Pour les lignes directrices fédérales en français, cliquez ici.](#)

Regardless of location, eligible Canadians can request medical assistance in dying.

**If you are experiencing a lot of pain and suffering due to your medical situation, talk to your physician or nurse practitioner about options in relation to your medical condition or circumstances and your possible interest in MAID.**

**If you do not have a regular practitioner, your province or territory may have a central MAID coordination service that can help you with the process.**

How and where this service will be offered is determined by:

- provinces and territories
- the organizations that regulate health professionals
- medical institutions

There may be additional requirements that you have to complete. Your health care provider can provide you with more information.

#### **Requesting the service**

On March 17, 2021, changes to the legislation on MAID took effect that change existing safeguards for eligible people [whose natural death is considered reasonably foreseeable](#).

The revised law also contains new safeguards for eligible people who are requesting MAID and whose death is **not** considered reasonably foreseeable.

All safeguards aim to make sure that those who ask for MAID:

- request the service of their own free will
- are able to make health care decisions for themselves
- are eligible (this means they meet **all** of the criteria above. See: [Eligibility](#))
- can and do give informed consent, which includes being informed of all care options available to them to help relieve suffering

Safeguards guide health care providers to carry out this service appropriately and in a way that protects people from abuse or misuse.

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### Procedural Safeguards - All Requests for MAID

#### *Undergo medical assessments*

Your request for MAID must be assessed by two independent practitioners.

Your physician or nurse practitioner must make sure that you are eligible to receive medical assistance in dying according to all of the listed criteria.

A second physician or nurse practitioner must also provide a written opinion confirming that you are eligible.

The physician or nurse practitioner providing the original assessment and the one giving the second opinion **must** be independent.

To be considered independent means that neither of them:

- holds a position of authority over the other
- could knowingly benefit from your death
- is connected to the other or to you in a way that could affect their objectivity

#### *Submit a signed written request for MAID*

For any person, whether your natural death is considered reasonably foreseeable, or not, you must sign a written request that says you want to have a medically assisted death.

Some provinces and territories may require that you complete a specific request form. These forms may be provided by your health care provider or available on a provincial or territorial website.

A written request for MAID **must include**:

1. Your signature confirming your request for MAID. If you are unable to write, another adult can sign the request on your behalf under your clear direction. This adult must:
  - be at least 18 years of age
  - understand what it means to request MAID
  - not benefit from your death (for example, they must not be an heir to your estate)
2. Your written request must be signed and dated before **one independent witness**, who must also sign and date the request.

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### Independent Witness

The role of the independent witness is to confirm to the signing and dating of the request by the person requesting MAID and that they understand what they are signing.

An independent witness must be at least 18 years of age and understand what it means to request MAID.

An independent witness can be a paid professional personal or health care worker.

To be considered independent means that the witness **cannot**:

- benefit from your death
- be an owner or operator of a health care facility where you live or are receiving care
- be an unpaid caregiver

### Withdrawal of your request

You must also be informed of your right to withdraw your request for MAID at **any** time and in any manner.

You are not obligated to proceed with MAID even if you are found eligible for the service.

Just before receiving MAID, you will also be given a final opportunity to withdraw your request.

### Final Consent

Immediately before MAID is provided to you, you must be given the opportunity to withdraw consent, and you must affirm that you consent to receive MAID. An exception to this requirement is possible in the case of people whose deaths are reasonably foreseeable (see [Waiver of Final Consent](#)).

### Waiver of Final Consent

- your [natural death is reasonably foreseeable](#)

AND

- while you had decision-making capacity:
  - you were assessed and approved to receive MAID
  - your practitioner advised that you are at risk of losing capacity to provide final consent
  - you made a written arrangement with your practitioner in which you consent in advance to receive MAID on your chosen date if you no longer have capacity to consent on that date

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

Any arrangement for the waiver of final consent will be considered **invalid** if, at the time that MAID is to be provided, you no longer have capacity **and** you demonstrate refusal or resistance to the administration of MAID by words, sounds or gestures.

For further clarity, reflexes and other types of involuntary movements, such as response to touch or the insertion of a needle, **would not constitute refusal or resistance**.

### *Waiver of final consent if you choose MAID by self-administration*

If you are eligible for MAID and you choose to self-administer prescribed medications for MAID, you may make an arrangement in writing with your practitioner so that they can administer MAID to you in a specific situation.

This specific arrangement allows for practitioner-administered MAID in the event of complications with self-administration that cause your loss of decision-making capacity but not your death. This means that your practitioner must be present at the time that you self-administer the medications.

### **Procedural Safeguards – Requests where your natural death is not reasonably foreseeable:**

If the practitioners assessing your request for MAID determine that [your death is not reasonably foreseeable](#), there are added safeguards that **must** be met to be eligible to receive MAID:

1. One of the two practitioners who provides an assessment must have expertise in the medical condition that is causing your unbearable suffering.
  - If neither of these practitioners have this expertise, another practitioner with expertise in your medical condition that is causing your suffering **must** be consulted in the assessment process.
2. You must be informed of available and appropriate means to relieve your suffering, including counselling services, mental health and disability support services, community services, and palliative care, and you must be offered consultations with professionals who provide those services.
3. You and your practitioners must have discussed reasonable and available means to relieve your suffering, and **all** agree that you have seriously considered those means.
4. Your eligibility assessment must take a minimum of 90 days, unless the assessments have been completed sooner and you are at immediate risk of losing your capacity to consent.
5. Immediately before MAID is provided, the practitioner must give you an opportunity to withdraw your request and ensure that you give express consent to receive MAID.

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### Useful links across Canada

[Dying with Dignity Canada](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

[End-of-Life Law & Policy in Canada](#)

### Yukon

[Government of Yukon](#)

### Northwest Territories

[Government of Northwest Territories](#)

[Interim Guidelines PDF](#)

### Nunavut

The Nunavut Department of Health has yet to provide information to the public on medical assistance in dying.

### British Columbia

[Government of British Columbia](#)

[Fraser Health](#)

[Island Health](#)

[Interior Health](#)

[Northern Health](#)

[Vancouver Coastal Health](#)

[British Columbia Request Forms](#)

## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### Alberta

[Alberta Health Services](#)

[How to Access MAiD in Alberta PDF](#)

[Getting More Information on MAiD PDF](#)

[Alberta Request Form](#)

### Manitoba

[Government of Manitoba - Shared Health](#)

[Prairie Mountain Health](#)

### Saskatchewan

[Government of Saskatchewan](#)

### Ontario

[Government of Ontario](#)

[MAiD Information for Patients PDF](#)

[Ontario Request Form](#)

### Quebec

[Government of Quebec – Gouvernement du Québec](#)

[Quebec Request Forms – Formulaire de Requête du Québec](#)



## How to Access Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada

### New Brunswick

[Government of New Brunswick – Gouvernement du Nouveau Brunswick](#)

[Horizon Health Network – Réseau de Santé Horizon](#)

[Vitalité Health Network – Réseau de Santé Vitalité](#)

[MAiD Patient Information PDF](#)

[Information aux Patients AMM PDF](#)

[MAiD Patient Request Form - Horizon Health Network](#)

[Formulaire de Demande du Patient AMM - Réseau de Santé Horizon](#)

[MAiD Patient Request Form](#)

### Newfoundland & Labrador

[Government of Newfoundland PDF](#)

[Newfoundland Request Forms](#)

### Prince Edward Island

[Government of Prince Edward Island](#)

### Nova Scotia

[Nova Scotia Health\\*](#)

**\*Note: MAID documents are to be completed only under the guidance of a MAID clinician, or the Nurse Navigator**