

What are my End-of-Life Options?

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning helps you think about, talk about and document your future healthcare wishes. It can be used to guide your medical care if you get sick or at the end of life.

Three forms can be included in advance care planning:

- **Goals of Care Designation Order** (a medical order that lets the healthcare team know your wishes to direct your care and guide medically indicated interventions)
- **Tracking Record** (lists all of your advance care planning discussions)
- **Personal Directive** (allows you to name someone you trust to make decisions for you if you can't speak for yourself, and make your wishes known to help direct your care)

These forms are kept in a plastic pocket called a Green Sleeve. You can update these forms if your wishes change.

Currently, the law will not permit you to ask for medical assistance in dying in a Personal Directive or have someone ask for it on your behalf.

To learn more about advance care planning, please speak to a healthcare provider or search for “[advance care planning overview](#)” at [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#) or [conversationsmatter.ca](#)

What is palliative care?

Palliative care is for people who have a serious illness that can't be cured and will shorten their life. It focuses on quality of life and symptom control.

Palliative care provides support through your illness and the dying process. You can start palliative care at the time you are diagnosed with a terminal illness and continue using it until you die. A palliative and end-of-life care team can help you with your needs and concerns regarding end-of-life care. They can support you and your family with the emotional, psychological and spiritual concerns related to the end of life. Palliative care also includes grief and bereavement support for your family and loved ones.

You have many choices when it comes to palliative and end-of-life care. Options may include support in your home, a hospital, continuing care centre, or hospice.

To find out more or access services in your area, call 811 or visit [MyHealth.Alberta.ca/palliative-care](#)

This information sheet is the first in a series of three about medical assistance in dying. It talks about a number of options at end of life.

For more information, please see the resources:

- *Medical Assistance in Dying—Getting More Information*
- *Medical Assistance in Dying—Eligibility and Planning.*

End-of-life care choices are important, sensitive, and emotional. AHS strives to provide compassionate, high quality care regardless of a patient's choice.

Your healthcare team can meet with you to talk about your wishes. They can work with you to help you decide on the care you want now and in the future. This is called advance care planning.



What is medical assistance in dying?

Medical assistance in dying is a relatively new healthcare option available to Albertans at the end of life. It allows a capable adult suffering from a grievous and irremediable medical condition to voluntarily request medicine that will bring about their death.

There are five phases of medical assistance in dying:

- **Pre-contemplation** (looking at and thinking about end-of-life care options)
- **Contemplation** (getting information about end-of-life care options)
- **Determination** (assessment of eligibility and formal request for medical assistance in dying)
- **Action** (confirming the request and patient death)
- **Care after death** (grief support)

You might move back and forth between the phases or choose not to proceed at any point.

To qualify for this service, you must meet all of the eligibility criteria set out by federal law. Information about this law can be found at ahs.ca/maid.

Important conversations about medical assistance in dying

The AHS Care Coordination Service is a single point of contact for you and your family to learn more about choices available at end-of-life.

You can contact the Care Coordination Service at MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca or by calling Health Link at 811.

If you want to learn more about medical assistance in dying, you can also talk with your doctor or nurse practitioner and your family. You can find helpful tips for this conversation at ahs.ca/maid.

What do I do next?

After thinking about this information, you might want to move to the contemplation phase. This means you would like more information on choices available at the end of life including advance care planning, palliative care, or medical assistance in dying.

The steps for getting more information about medical assistance in dying can be found in the resource titled *Medical Assistance in Dying—Getting More Information*.



Respect and dignity

You can change your mind about your end-of-life choices including medical assistance in dying at any time. AHS is committed to supporting your informed healthcare decisions. This means your right to consent to, withdraw from, and refuse healthcare will be respected. AHS is also committed to ensuring your dignity is maintained regardless of your choices, and providing you with our support through your journey.

For further information

Care Coordination Service:

MAID.CareTeam@ahs.ca

Web: ahs.ca/maid

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

