

Advance request for medical aid in dying

The Act respecting end-of-life care allows persons to make an advance request for medical aid in dying. This reflection tool is for people who wish to make a request to a competent professional.

Who can make an advance request?

Only certain people who are suffering from a serious and incurable illness leading to incapacity may make this specific type of request. It is intended for situations in which the illness may later prevent you from making decisions for yourself.



Before making a request, you must:

- ☐ Take time to think it over;
- ☐ Discuss your request with a physician or a specialized nurse practitioner (SNP).

This reflection tool will help you:

- Prepare for your meeting with a competent professional authorized under the Act;
- Reflect on your request for medical aid in dying;
- Guide you in filling out the secure online form.

You must bring this tool to your appointments with your physician or specialized nurse practitioner (SNP).



Feel free to discuss the more difficult sections with your loved ones or your health professional.

If you need support, do not hesitate to call **Info-Social 811**. Professionals are available to provide psychosocial support and help with emotional or social struggles. They can also refer you to an appropriate health and social services resource or community resource, if needed.



Step 1: Criteria for making a request

To make an advance request for medical aid in dying, you must:

- ☐ Be **18 years or older** and make the request yourself, without pressure from anyone else.
- ☐ Make sure your **health insurance card** is not expired.
- ☐ Have been diagnosed with a serious and incurable illness that could prevent you from making decisions about your care at the time of the request.
 - A serious and incurable illness is one that alters brain function over time. It may cause memory loss, confusion and disorientation. It may also make speaking, understanding and thinking more difficult.
 - The diagnosis must have been made by a competent health professional.
 - A mental health disorder cannot be the illness for which a person makes a request.
 - An advance request cannot be made unless the person has been diagnosed with a serious and incurable illness leading to incapacity.

Your diagnosis:

Date of your diagnosis:

Name of physician or SNP who diagnosed the illness:

Additional details, if needed:



Step 2: Reasons for making an advance request for medical aid in dying

- ☐ Refer to the *Guide for the person and their loved ones - Advance request for medical aid in dying* at publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2024/24-828-06WA.pdf

What are the reasons you are making an advance request for medical aid in dying?

Step 2 - continued

What are you most afraid of in terms of how your illness will progress?

What things would constitute a loss of dignity, autonomy or integrity?



Step 3:
Identify observable signs and symptoms of the illness

These signs and symptoms can affect several aspects of your life:

- Mood
- Personality
- Autonomy
- Pain
- Memory
- Reasoning
- Sleep
- Communication
- Falls
- Physical condition

You must describe them clearly so that a health professional can observe and assess them. Whenever possible, specify how severe they are, how often they occur and under what circumstances.

For example, saying “I don’t recognize my family members anymore” is a possible sign of the illness, but it is not specific enough to be assessed. It is important to specify who you mean: your spouse, your children, or other family members?

Step 3 - continued

The signs of the illness that you list in your advance request are very important because they will stand in for your consent at the time you receive medical aid in dying.

To help you reflect, you can attend support groups or contact associations for people living with the same illness, visit reliable websites on the subject, or speak to your care team.

What are the signs and symptoms of your illness? How is your illness progressing?

Which symptoms would become unbearable and make you want to receive medical aid in dying?

3.1 You may have several symptoms that you find difficult to tolerate. You must now indicate whether you want all these symptoms to be present before receiving medical aid in dying, or only some of them.

This clarification is important because it will help the professionals respect your wishes.

- ☐ I want all the symptoms that I identified to be present before I receive medical aid in dying.
- ☐ I want at least one of the symptoms that I identified to be present before I receive medical aid in dying.
- ☐ Other: _____

To receive medical aid in dying following an advance request, you must have the symptoms that you identified, as well as physical or psychological difficulties that you consider to be unbearable. It may be difficult for your care team to distinguish between these difficulties and the symptoms of the illness.

Step 3 - continued

What psychological difficulties do you not want to experience?

- Would losing interest in your daily activities be a sign that something is becoming too difficult for you?
- Would no longer being aware of what is happening around you or of your interactions with others be too difficult for you to tolerate?

3.2 As your illness progresses and you develop problems remembering or understanding information, you may refuse certain aspects of your daily care. This could make it more difficult to administer medical aid in dying at the scheduled time, even if all the conditions are met.

It is recommended that you speak to your physician or SNP about receiving medication to calm you down if you refuse care. If you would like medication to help calm you down, you need to state this and write it in your request.

Would you be comfortable receiving medication to calm you down if you refuse care?

If you are considering this option, have you discussed it with your loved ones and someone you trust?

☐ Yes

☐ No. Specify the reasons:



Step 4: Inform your loved ones about your request

4.1 Medical aid in dying is an important decision. For that reason, it is strongly recommended you discuss it with your loved ones and have their support throughout the process.

☐ I have informed my loved ones about my request. Specify their names and their relationship to you:

☐ I have not informed my loved ones. Specify the reason:

4.2 You may designate one or two trusted third persons, but this is not mandatory.

A trusted third person must be of full age and capable of making decisions. Their role is to make sure your wishes—expressed in writing in your advance request—are made known after you are no longer capable of expressing them yourself.

You can also designate a substitute trusted third person in case the first person is no longer able to fulfill the role when the time comes.

If you have not designated a trusted third person, your care team will be responsible for starting the process once you are no longer capable of making decisions for yourself.

When choosing your trusted third person(s), consider the following questions:

- Does this person know about my health condition and my wishes?
- Will this person still be able to help me with my health issues in the coming years?
- Do I trust this person to respect my wishes and communicate them to my care team?

If you wish to designate one or more trusted third persons, talk to them about whether they are willing to take on this role.

You can also ask them to go with you to your appointment with the physician or SNP.

☐ I do not wish to designate a trusted third person. Specify the reason:

☐ I have identified one or two trusted third persons. Specify their names and their relationship to you:

Important information

It is important to understand that making an advance request through legal channels does not automatically guarantee that you will receive medical aid in dying.

The Act requires that competent professionals meet certain conditions. For this reason, in addition to the symptoms you have identified in your request, all the conditions set out in the Act must be met for you to receive medical aid in dying:

- Have a valid, up-to-date health insurance card;
- Have a serious and incurable illness leading to incapacity to give consent to care;
- Have the observable signs and symptoms of the illness described in your advance request;
- Be exhibiting signs of suffering that lead the physician or SNP to believe that you are experiencing enduring and unbearable pain or discomfort that cannot be relieved under conditions that you consider tolerable.

If the physician or SNP does not observe unbearable pain or discomfort that cannot be relieved, medical aid in dying cannot be administered, even if you have the symptoms identified in your request.

You may change your mind at any time. If you are still capable of making decisions, you may withdraw your request by filling out the required form; a physician or an SNP will help you do this.

If you wish to change anything in your request, you must submit a new one. Once it is added to the provincial register, this new request will automatically replace the previous one.



USEFUL RESOURCES

The Association québécoise pour le droit de mourir dans la dignité (AQDMD) also provides a patient guide to support people through the process of making an advance request for medical aid in dying. This guide is available online on the association's website aqdmd.org/en.



Notes



QUESTIONS?

Write down the questions you would like to ask the physician or SNP.

