Patient Information

Medical assistance in dying
Who can receive medical assistance in dying in New Brunswick?

You may receive medical assistance in dying if you meet all of these criteria:

- 18 years of age or over
- Able to make decisions about your health
- Eligible for health services funded by a government in Canada
- Affected by serious, incurable health problems
- Requested medical assistance in dying voluntarily, with no pressure from others
- Able to understand the information about medical assistance in dying
- Able to give an informed consent

Exclusions:
- Individuals suffering from mental illness (not accompanied by a physical illness)
- Requests for medical assistance in dying made in advance

What is medical assistance in dying?

Medical assistance in dying is provided by a doctor or nurse practitioner. If your request is eligible, they may:

- administer a medication to you that will cause your death peacefully;
- prescribe a medication that will cause your death peacefully. You may be able to take it yourself.

When can you request medical assistance in dying?

- You are suffering from a serious and incurable disease or disability.
- Your illness is advanced and will not improve.
- Your suffering is constant and unbearable, and cannot be relieved in any way that you find acceptable.
- Your natural death is near, even if no one knows exactly how much time you have left.

E.g.:
- Terminal cancer
- Advanced Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Advanced cardiac or pulmonary disease

Medical assistance in dying

You have the right to request medical assistance in dying if you are suffering from a serious illness and are at the end of your life.
You ask a doctor or nurse practitioner for medical assistance in dying in a free and informed way.

The doctor or nurse practitioner explains medical assistance in dying to you, as well as your other options, such as pain management, palliative care, and sedation.

A doctor or nurse practitioner who has conscientious objections will refer you to another doctor, nurse practitioner, or Tele-Care 811.

You consider the information given to you and your options.

You and your family may request psychological, social or spiritual support.

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You decide how medical assistance in dying will be provided to you:

a. administered by a doctor or nurse practitioner; at the hospital or your residence;

b. administered by yourself using medication prescribed by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

At least 10 days must elapse between the day you sign your request for the first time and the day when you receive medical assistance in dying.

Exceptionally, a shorter period may be granted in some circumstances.

Written request
You have the right to change your mind at any time.

If, after due consideration, you wish to receive medical assistance in dying, you complete and sign a request for medical assistance in dying form in front of two witnesses.

Two professionals* confirm that you are able to make decisions and are eligible.

If you are physically unable to sign the form, a third party may do so in your place.

Consent
If your request is accepted, you must sign the consent form in front of a witness to confirm again your wish to receive medical assistance in dying.

If you are physically unable to sign the form, a third party may do so in your place.

The doctor or nurse practitioner will ensure that you are eligible for medical assistance in dying.

Before proceeding, you confirm one last time, verbally, that you wish to receive medical assistance in dying.

Medical assistance in dying is provided to you.

* A nurse practitioner and a doctor or two doctors.
What are your rights?

You have the right to:

• receive medication to relieve your suffering;
• refuse care or stop a treatment under way. This includes the choice to refuse medications, food and liquids;
• be sedated and be maintained unconscious to relieve your suffering until you die;
• request medical assistance in dying;
• choose to die at home or in the hospital.

What can you do if you cannot wait 10 days?

If the doctor or nurse practitioner feels that your death or loss of the ability to give informed consent will occur in less than 10 days, a shorter reflection period may be granted to you.

What can you do if you are unable to date and sign the request?

If you are physically unable to sign the request for medical assistance in dying form, a third party can do it on your behalf, in your presence and at your request.

What can you do if your request is rejected?

• Ineligible: If your request is rejected because the doctor or nurse practitioner decides that you are not eligible for medical assistance in dying, you may submit a request to have your file reviewed by another doctor or another nurse practitioner.
• Unable to make a decision: If the doctor or nurse practitioner decides that you are not able to make decisions about your health, you can contact a lawyer and appeal against their decision.

Who can be your witness?

Anyone who is at least 18 years of age and who understands the nature of your request for medical assistance in dying may be your witness, unless they:

• believe that they will inherit from you and will receive a material advantage or money on your death;
• own or operate the facility where you are residing;
• are directly involved in your health care (e.g., member of the care team);
• directly provide personal care to you (e.g., caregiver).
Who should you talk to?

Discuss medical assistance in dying with:

- a doctor or nurse practitioner and ask them what your options are;
- members of your family to help them understand your wishes and prepare them for your death.

If you prefer to discuss medical assistance in dying with another person, you can call 811 for more information.