

# Key Facts about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)



End-of-life care is a complex and personal issue. People will have varying opinions, experiences and feelings about this topic. The Society advocates for people living with dementia, their caregivers and family members to be included in discussions and decisions that affect them, including Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD).

## What is MAiD?

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) is a medical procedure that involves the administration of medications to end the life of a person who meets strict legal criteria, at the person's request. The person must be assessed and approved based on strict eligibility criteria. MAiD was legalized in Canada with the passage of Bill C-14 in 2016 and expanded in 2021 with the passage of Bill C-7.

## Types of MAiD?

The legislation allows for two types of MAiD in Canada, both intended to relieve suffering and ensure quality of living and dying:

- The direct administration of medications or substances **by a health-care provider** to end the life of a person at their request.
- The **self-administration** of medications or substances by a person to end their life, prescribed by a healthcare provider and at the person's request.

## Who is eligible for MAiD?

To be eligible for MAiD, a person must meet all the following criteria:

- At least 18 years of age.
- Eligible for publicly-funded health services in Canada.
- Able to make your own decisions about your health and this decision in particular.
- Have a serious and incurable illness, disease or disability that has advanced or declined to the point where it cannot be reversed.
- Suffer unbearably from a medical condition, either physically or psychologically.
- Have been informed of the other options that are available to relieve the suffering, including palliative care.
- Making this request of one's own free will and not of pressure or influence from others.

## Can a person in an early stage of dementia request access to MAiD for when they reach a later stage of the disease?

Yes, but only if certain requirements are met. If a person living with dementia is requesting MAiD, and they are at risk of losing capacity prior to the date that MAiD would be administered, they can submit a waiver of final consent provided that:

- The person's natural death is reasonably foreseeable,
- The person has been deemed eligible for MAiD after being assessed by a qualified healthcare provider, and
- The person has set a date for when MAiD would be administered.

## What does a waiver of final consent do?

With a waiver of final consent in place, a person would no longer have to give express consent when the date arrives for MAiD to be administered. This means that a person living with dementia and requesting MAiD would not feel that they must set a date for MAiD earlier than they would want, due to fear of losing capacity before their preferred date.

Once a date to receive MAiD is set, the person requesting MAiD can still change it if they are deemed capable of providing consent. MAiD can be provided before the set date but not after.

The provider does not administer MAiD if refusal is shown with words, sounds or gestures on the day of MAiD.

\* **Note:** the waiver does not legally compel the provider to provide MAiD.

## Safeguards

The current safeguards surrounding MAiD include:

- Requirement of assessments by two independent health-care providers (doctor or nurse practitioner).
- Requirement of a signed written request for MAiD, verified by an independent witness.
- The ability to withdraw a request at any time.

Safeguards for those who are not considered near death include the above and:

- One of the assessors must be an expert in the condition.
- The person must be informed of other options to alleviate suffering (counseling, community supports, palliative care) and offered consultations with specialists providing these services.
- The practitioner must believe the person has seriously considered all options to relieve suffering.
- A 90-day waiting period during the eligibility assessment (unless risk of capacity loss is present).
- Requirement of practitioner confirming consent again at the moment of MAiD.

## What about advance requests?

Advance requests are currently not permitted under Canadian law for people living with dementia. In an advance request, a person would specify the conditions under which they would want to receive MAiD along the disease progression. The waiver of final consent is different from an advance request, as a person must be assessed and approved for MAiD and set a date.

## How can I find out if I am eligible for MAiD?

If you're a person living with dementia and would like to know if you are eligible for MAiD, we recommend speaking with your healthcare provider. Usually, this would be your family doctor.

If you do not have a family doctor, you may speak to the physician or nurse practitioner who is most responsible for your care. You may also ask other members of your care team to connect you with a care provider who can speak with you about your request.

### Additional resources:

[Canadian virtual hospice  
Government of B.C.](#)  
[Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers](#)  
[Dying with Dignity Canada](#)  
[Alzheimer Society of B.C. - MAiD page](#)  
[Alzheimer Society of B.C. - MAiD webinar or  
alzbc.org/ondemand.](#)

### Health Authority MAiD Coordination Centres

[Fraser Health](#)  
[Interior Health](#)  
[Island Health](#)  
[Northern Health](#)  
[Vancouver Coastal Health](#)  
[Provincial Health Services Authority](#)