

## Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) – FAQ

### 1. What is MAID?

Medical Assistance In Dying is an end-of-life care option that an individual, with a serious condition causing long-term suffering, can voluntarily request.

Medical Assistance In Dying (MAID) is when:

- a physician or nurse practitioner administers medications, at your request, that will end your life, or
- the prescribing of a substance by a physician or nurse practitioner, at your request, that when self-administered will end your life

**At RVH, MAID is only offered by a physician or nurse practitioner administering medications. A prescription to be self-administered is not an option offered at RVH.**

MAID is a complex and deeply personal topic. When making a decision regarding MAID, your healthcare team will make sure you understand your options and can communicate your decision. You will have time to think about your decision and may change your decision at any time.

### 2. Who can request MAID?

Only you can voluntarily request MAID. No one else can make the decision for you.

To receive MAID you must meet the eligibility requirements.

### 3. What are the eligibility requirements?

To receive medical assistance in dying in Ontario, you must:

- be eligible for publicly funded healthcare services in Canada
- be 18 years of age or older
- be capable of making healthcare decisions
- be able to provide informed consent, which means that you have given permission after you have received all the information you need to make your decision

- voluntarily request medical assistance in dying
- have a grievous and irremediable medical condition, which means you:
  - have a serious and incurable illness, disease or disability
  - are in an advanced state of irreversible decline
  - are enduring physical or psychological suffering, caused by the medical condition or the state of decline, that is intolerable and cannot be relieved

*\*Currently, Canadians whose only medical condition is a mental illness, and who otherwise meet all eligibility criteria, are not eligible for MAID.*

#### **4. Who do I speak with in order to learn more about MAID?**

You can speak to any member of your healthcare team to learn more about MAID. This could be someone you are comfortable with and trust such as your doctor, nurse, spiritual care provider, social worker, or other member of the care team.

The member of your care team will connect you with a member of the MAID team who can provide you with the information you need.

Questions can also be directed to the Patient and Family Experience Office who can connect patients to the appropriate people.

Only physicians or nurse practitioners can determine your eligibility and administer MAID.

#### **5. Is there a right decision?**

This will be a personal decision based on your values, beliefs and healthcare goals. Only you can determine what is right or wrong for you.

Your healthcare team will provide you with all the information you need to make an informed decision.

**6. Can others make the decision for me?**

No. Only you can make the decision to request and receive MAID. Others cannot make this decision for you if you are not capable of communicating your wishes.

**7. Can I write down my wishes for MAID in case I lose my ability to make decisions about my health care?**

No, you must be able to ask for MAID when you request it, it cannot be written as an advanced directive.

**8. Who decides if I meet the criteria for MAID?**

Two or more physicians or nurse practitioners will assess whether you meet all eligibility requirements.

**9. Who do I talk to if I am worried my healthcare provider is against MAID?**

At RVH, we ensure a patient-centred response to all care including requests for MAID. RVH will respond to patient requests in a comprehensive, timely and patient-centered manner.

Conscientious objections by staff will be respected, however patient requests for MAID or information about MAID will prompt an immediate referral/access to clinicians and staff who are willing to provide MAID related care.

**10. Is MAID covered by OHIP?**

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers all MAID services and medications. Insurance companies have agreed not to withhold life insurance benefits from patients who have chosen MAID and the Coroner's Office will help families with insurance claims.

**11. How do I make a request for MAID?**

You can speak to any member of your healthcare team, who will connect you with appropriate professionals who can answer your questions and provide information about receiving MAID.

Patients may direct questions to the Patient and Family Experience Office who can connect patients with the appropriate people.

To make a request for MAID, you must make a written request by completing the [Ontario government request form](#). This form requires two witnesses. The written request is submitted to your physician or nurse practitioner.

## 12. How do I access the request form?

Please speak to a member of your healthcare team who can assist you in accessing the form.

You can also visit the Ontario Ministry of Health website to access forms. Please visit [Ontario.ca](#).

## 13. Who can witness my request form?

You will require an independent witness to confirm the signing and dating of the request and they must understand what they are signing. An independent witness must be at least 18 years of age and understand what it means to request MAID.

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

- Benefit from your death
- Be an owner or operator of a healthcare facility where you live or are receiving care
- Be an unpaid caregiver

## 14. How long does the process take?

If your natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, you must wait at least 90 days between submitting your written request and receiving MAID. During this time a comprehensive assessment of your individual circumstances leading to your request for MAID will be completed to determine your eligibility to proceed. In cases where loss of capacity to provide informed consent is imminent **and you have been found eligible for MAID**, a waiver of final consent may be completed.

If you are eligible for MAID and death is found to be reasonably foreseeable then accommodation for a shorter wait time can proceed when the patient and physician are ready.

## **15. Can I change my mind?**

Yes, you can change your mind at any time.

You will be asked several times throughout the process if you would still like to receive MAID, including right before MAID is administered. End-of-life care can involve very difficult decisions and we want to ensure you are always informed and able to make the right decision for you, which includes withdrawing your request at any time.

## **16. What does informed consent mean when requesting MAID?**

When requesting MAID, consent needs to be:

- Informed: You have been given all the information needed to make your decision, including your medical diagnosis, available forms of treatment, and available options to relieve suffering.
- Voluntary: No one is forcing you to make this request.
- In writing: Your request has been made in writing using the Ontario Ministry of Health consent form.

## **17. What does it mean to be capable of making a decision about your healthcare?**

A person is capable of making a decision if the individual is both:

- able to understand the information that is relevant to making that decision, and,
- able to appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of that decision or lack of decision.

## **18. What is a grievous and irremediable medical condition?**

A grievous and irremediable medical condition is when an individual has:

- A serious and incurable illness, disease or disability (At this time mental illness is not considered to be an illness, disease or disability for the purposes of MAID)
- In an advanced state of irreversible decline, and
- The illness, disease or disability, or that state of decline, causes them enduring physical or psychological suffering that is intolerable to them and that cannot be relieved under conditions that they consider acceptable

### **19. What is suffering?**

To request MAID, your suffering must be considered “enduring and intolerable.” This means that your suffering is expected to last a long time and cannot be managed at a level you can tolerate or find acceptable.

### **20. How is MAID different from stopping or not starting treatment?**

Patients always have the right to stop treatment or to start treatment. Stopping treatment does not mean you choose to end your life, but your death may still happen.

When requesting MAID, you are making an informed decision to end your life.

### **21. Who can give MAID?**

In Ontario, only physicians and nurse practitioners can provide medical assistance in dying.

Some members of your healthcare team may not want to be involved in your decision to end your life because it is uncomfortable for them. You will always be given the care and support you need, even if that means being referred to another healthcare professional.

### **22. Will my whole healthcare team be involved?**

Many healthcare professionals may be involved in providing options for treatment and care including:

- physicians
- nurse practitioners
- palliative care
- social work
- speech and language pathologist
- spiritual care
- nurses
- community referrals where appropriate

### **23. How can my family be involved?**

You may wish to inform your family of your decision. Making decisions about end-of-life care are extremely difficult and it can be very helpful to have a strong

support system through family and friends. Your decision regarding MAID will also affect your family and friends.

If you choose, you can have family members present when receiving MAID. It is important that those present understand what they will see and agree to stay with you. Your healthcare team can help provide you and your family members with the information needed. Your healthcare team will follow up with family members as requested and as appropriate.

#### **24. What if want to be an organ donor?**

Please speak to a member of your healthcare team if you would like to be an organ donor. You can also contact the Trillium Gift of Life Network. You can find more information on their website, [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca)

#### **25. What happens after?**

Your healthcare team will follow up with family members as requested and as appropriate.

In Ontario, the coroner is notified of all MAID deaths. Family members should be aware that the coroner's process may delay the transferring of your body to a funeral home after MAID. The Coroner's Office may contact the listed next of kin.

You may want to plan ahead to ensure that your personal affairs, wishes and funeral plans are in order.

#### **26. What if I don't have a doctor?**

You can contact the care coordination service where you can be connected with a doctor or nurse practitioner who provides MAID services. You can also receive more information about MAID through this service. The care coordination service can be reached at 1-866-286-4023 or TTY 1-844-953-3350.

#### **27. I don't think my family member has made the right decision, what can I do?**

Your family member's decision to receive MAID services can be really difficult to understand. Yes, this decision impacts you, but the decision to receive MAID is up to the individual requesting the service.

An individual requesting MAID is well informed about all other options and the MAID process when they make their decision. Their healthcare team will provide

the information and support requested. An individual can withdraw their request at any time.

End-of-life care decisions are difficult, your family member will benefit from your support during this difficult process.

There are support services available if you are having a difficult time understanding and accepting your family member's decision.

**28. Can I be with the individual when they receive the service?**

Yes, if the individual has requested that you be present. We encourage you to speak with the individual and their healthcare team beforehand so that you can receive the information you need and know what to expect.