

Medical Aid in Dying

The Colorado End of Life Options Act was approved by Colorado voters in 2016 to allow medical aid in dying. This means an eligible person with a terminal illness can receive a prescription for medication that they can choose to take to bring about a peaceful death.

Frequently Asked Questions

<p>Who is eligible?</p>	<p>To be eligible for medical aid in dying you must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult • Terminally ill with six months or less to live • Mentally capable of making your own healthcare decisions • A resident of Colorado • Acting voluntarily • Making an informed decision which includes being told about all other end-of-life options • Informed that you may choose to get the medication, but you don't have to take it • Able to take the medication on your own
<p>What steps do I need to take?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with your doctor about your wishes; if your doctor does not want to participate (that is his/her right by law), you may transfer your care to a doctor who will support your end-of-life choices. You will need to bring your proof of Colorado residence to your appointments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending doctor's name: _____ • Speak with a consulting doctor who will confirm that you are eligible to receive the medication. The prescribing doctor will refer you to this person. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting doctor's name: _____ • Make a verbal request to the attending doctor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of first verbal request: _____ • Make a second verbal request at least 15 days from the first request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of second verbal request: _____ • Make one written request to the attending doctor using the required state form that has been signed by 2 witnesses; this form can be given to your doctor during either of the visits where you made your verbal requests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of written request: _____ • Your attending doctor needs to order the medication for you and send notification to the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date medication order sent to the pharmacy: _____ • Decide who you would like to be with you when you take the medication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name(s): _____ • Date you plan to ingest the medication: _____

Can the requests be made by someone else?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, only you can make the verbal and written requests, and you must be able to take the medication yourself.
What does my doctor have to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Colorado doctors must consult with you and agree that you are eligible to receive medical aid in dying. One doctor will prescribe the medication, and the other doctor gives a consulting opinion. If either doctor cannot determine whether you have the mental capacity to make this request, a psychiatrist or psychologist must evaluate you to ensure that you are able to make your own healthcare decisions.
Do I have to take the medication if I get it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, you can receive the medication and choose not to use it. That choice is always yours.
What are my other end-of-life options?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain and symptom management: Can be provided in medical or assisted living settings, and in the home. Involves the use of medications and other therapies such as massage, acupuncture, and aromatherapy to bring comfort. Hospice: For people with a prognosis of six months or less, hospice care focuses on quality of life rather than the length of life, with the goal of comfort. You will have a team of health care professionals working with you and your family to help you manage your symptoms and provide spiritual support. Voluntarily stopping of eating and drinking (VSED): Some people choose to stop eating and drinking to shorten the dying process. Pain and symptom management should be done to lessen any discomfort, and can be handled by the hospice team. Declining or stopping life-sustaining treatment: Treatments aimed at prolonging life (e.g. feeding tube, ventilator, antibiotics, etc.) can be refused at any time. Pain and symptom management should be done to lessen discomfort. Palliative sedation: This option involves being medicated to reduce consciousness.

(Source: CompassionandChoices.org)

If you have more questions about your end-of life-options, please talk to your doctor. For more information, refer to any of the resources listed below.

Compassion & Choices: www.compassionandchoices.org

Death with Dignity: www.deathwithdignity.org/states/colorado/

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/medical-aid-dying