

Quick reference guide for a person using the assisted dying service

Considering assisted dying



1

Find information

You can search 'assisted dying' on the Ministry of Health's website [health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz), or ask your health care team for information.



2

Think about your options

Talk to your whānau or other people who are important to you (if you want to).



3

Ask your doctor about assisted dying

Your doctor cannot raise assisted dying with you, so you need to. You should make it clear that you are asking about assisted dying. You can talk to your GP or specialist. You can take your whānau or a support person with you.



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Find a doctor to help you

You will need a doctor to help you through the assisted dying process. This doctor is your attending medical practitioner.

Not all doctors will provide assisted dying. If your doctor doesn't, you can contact the Ministry of Health on **0800 223 852** or AssistedDying@health.govt.nz to find a doctor to help you.

The assisted dying process



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Make a formal request to your attending medical practitioner

Your attending medical practitioner will talk to you about assisted dying and your other end of life care options. They will also speak to your health care team and your whānau (if you agree to this). You will be asked to sign a form if you want to continue and find out if you are eligible.



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Your attending medical practitioner will check if you are eligible

This will involve seeing you and reviewing your medical notes. You can take your whānau or a support person with you. Your attending medical practitioner may also ask to speak to you alone at some points.



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If you might be eligible, you will need a second assessment

An independent doctor will check if you are eligible too. This will be similar to the assessment by the attending medical practitioner. Both doctors need to agree you are eligible for the process to continue.



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A psychiatrist checks if you are competent (if necessary)

If the first two doctors think you are eligible, but are not sure if you can make an informed decision about assisted dying, they will ask a psychiatrist to assess you too. A psychiatrist is a doctor who specialises in mental health.



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Your attending medical practitioner will tell you if you are eligible or not

If you're not eligible, they will explain why to you and your whānau. They will also make sure you have access to the appropriate care and support.

Planning for an assisted death



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Make plans for your assisted death

If you are eligible and want to continue, your attending medical practitioner (or a nurse practitioner) will help you and your whānau make plans for your assisted death. This includes when and where, what medications, who is there, and any social, cultural or spiritual practices you'd like. You'll have a care plan to help you with this planning.



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Assisted death

At the time and date you have chosen, your attending medical practitioner (or a nurse practitioner) will check if you still want to go ahead. If you do, the medication will be administered. They will stay with you and your whānau until after you have died.



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Follow-up support

A clinical advisor at the Ministry of Health will contact your whānau at an agreed time after your death. The clinical advisor can provide support or advice to your whānau if they would like this.

Throughout the process



Other health care continues

You can still see your current health care team, and you can get any other end of life care, including palliative and hospice care.



You can involve your whānau

Whānau, support people or other people who are important to you can be involved if you want this. They can come to appointments with you and help you make plans. But, only you can make the decision about choosing assisted dying.



A clinical advisor is there to help you

You and your whānau will have a clinical advisor at the Ministry of Health who can answer questions, give you information or provide support throughout the process.



You can stop the process at any time

If you change your mind about assisted dying, you can stop the process at any time before the administration of the medication. Some people may find out if they are eligible for assisted dying, but will not go on to have an assisted death.



You'll be supported if you're not eligible

If the assessment process finds that you are not eligible, your attending medical practitioner will explain this to you and your whānau. You'll be given support and advice on other care options.



The process will stop if you are being pressured

No-one else can make the decision about assisted dying on your behalf or pressure you into this option. If you are being pressured into choosing assisted dying, the process will stop. You'll be given support and advice on other care options.

More detailed information about the steps involved in the process can be found on the Ministry of Health's website health.govt.nz/ADS