



Department of
Health

Voluntary assisted dying

**Information for patients,
family and the community**

This brochure is for information purposes only.
This brochure has information about death and
dying which some people may find distressing.



What is voluntary assisted dying?

In Western Australia (WA), voluntary assisted dying (VAD) means an eligible person can access medication to help end their life.

This choice is available to eligible people who are dying and near the end of their life, with the help of doctors or nurse practitioners who have been specifically trained.

Who can I ask for information?

You can ask any doctor, nurse or healthcare worker, including your GP, questions about voluntary assisted dying.

You can ask as many questions as you want, to fully understand all the options available to you.

Asking questions does not mean you have chosen to start the process, and nothing will happen without your consent.

The Statewide Care Navigator Service can help you access information and resources anywhere in Western Australia. Their phone number and email address are on the back page. There is no fee for this service.

What are the steps involved?

There are 3 main parts in the voluntary assisted dying process.

It's important to know you can stop the process at any time and your wishes will be respected no matter which steps you have already taken.

1. Requests and assessments

You will need to make formal requests to access voluntary assisted dying, including making a 'first request'. More information on this step is outlined on the next page.

Two voluntary assisted dying trained doctors will then decide if you are eligible in 2 separate assessments.

Assessments can happen in person, or sometimes by videoconference.

Your usual doctor might not be able to do these assessments, but they can keep caring for you.

2. Administration decision and prescription

This is where you talk with your voluntary assisted dying doctor to decide how the voluntary assisted dying medication will be taken if you choose to use it.

The doctor will write a prescription and give it to the Statewide Pharmacy Service. The Statewide Pharmacy Service does not charge fees for its services.

After the prescription has been written, the doctor will continue to care for you throughout the process.

3. After you die

The choice to access voluntary assisted dying is yours and will not be recorded on your death certificate.

If I decide I want to use voluntary assisted dying, what happens next?

Making a first request

A first request is a formal request to access voluntary assisted dying. It is different to simply asking questions or seeking information.

A first request must be:

- to a doctor
- in person or by videoconference
- during a medical appointment or consultation
- clear and cannot be misunderstood.

You can make a first request to any doctor. It doesn't have to be your regular doctor.

Only you can make a first request. No one else can make a first request for you – no matter who else is involved in your care and support. Your partner, children, other family members or carers cannot make a first request on your behalf.

You can use words, writing, gestures or aids to communicate. If needed, an interpreter can help you make a first request.

Your request must be clear, so the doctor understands what you want.

While all doctors are required to give you information about voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia, only specially trained doctors can provide this care.

The doctor may refuse your first request. This does not mean you are not eligible; it simply means they are not going to be your VAD doctor. It doesn't mean they won't continue to care for you.

To find a specially trained doctor, regardless of where in WA you live, contact the Statewide Care Navigator Service.

Who is eligible?

To access voluntary assisted dying, you must:

- be over 18 years old
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- have lived in WA for at least 12 months
- have an illness that:
 - is advanced, getting worse and won't get better
 - will cause death within 6 months, or within 12 months for neurodegenerative conditions
 - is causing suffering that can't be relieved in a way that is tolerable for you.
- be acting voluntarily and without coercion (that is, without force, influence or persuasion by another person)
- have capacity to understand and make decisions about voluntary assisted dying
- make a request for access that is enduring (this simply means that your choice to access voluntary assisted dying must be shown clearly throughout the process).

You do not have to stop any other medical treatment while going through the voluntary assisted dying process. You can choose to keep having active treatment like chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery or make other care choices, such as palliative care, that you feel are right for you.

Confidentiality

You don't have to tell anyone about your choice to use voluntary assisted dying if you don't want to. Information will not be shared with your family, carers or health practitioners without your consent.

WA Statewide Care Navigator Service



The WA Statewide Care Navigator Service can:

- answer general questions and provide information
- provide informed and compassionate support to you and your loved ones
- locate a specially trained doctor to help you, regardless of where you live.

Email: VADcarenavigator@health.wa.gov.au

Phone: 9431 2755

8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

The WA Statewide Care Navigator Service is a free service.

Department of Health

More information is available on the Department of Health WA website:

healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/End-of-life-care

If reading this has made you upset and you want help, please call:

LifeLine WA

13 11 14 (available 24/7)

lifelinewa.org.au

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