

Voluntary assisted dying

Community Information

The Parliament of New South Wales passed the **Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022** (the Act) on 19 May 2022. This Act will allow eligible people the choice to access voluntary assisted dying from 28 November 2023. People cannot access voluntary assisted dying in NSW before this date. From now until November 2023, NSW Health will plan for and implement voluntary assisted dying in NSW. NSW Health will provide ongoing information to the community throughout 2022 and 2023.

What is voluntary assisted dying?

Voluntary assisted dying means an eligible person can ask for medical help to end their life. The person must be in the late stages of an advanced disease, illness or medical condition. They must also be experiencing suffering they find unbearable.

If a person meets all the criteria and the steps set out in the law are followed, they can take or be given a voluntary assisted dying substance to bring about their death at a time they choose. The substance must be prescribed by a doctor who is eligible to provide voluntary assisted dying services.

'Voluntary' means the choice must be the person's own. Only the person who wants voluntary assisted dying can ask for it. It is against the law to pressure someone to ask for voluntary assisted dying. The NSW legislation has safeguards in place to make sure the person is protected.

Are there other support services available?

Yes. Voluntary assisted dying provides an additional choice to people who are already at the end of their life about the manner and timing of their death. However, most people find health services, including palliative care, give them the support they need at the end of their lives.

Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life for people who have a life-limiting illness. It also provides support to their family and carers. You can find more information on other support services and end of life planning at:

- [NSW Health palliative care](#) – find a list of end of life and palliative care resources in NSW.
- [Advance care planning](#) – make your wishes about health care known to your loved ones and health professionals.

Your doctor or treating medical team is best placed to discuss your personal situation and any support services that could help you.

Who is eligible for voluntary assisted dying in NSW?

A person can only access voluntary assisted dying under the law if they meet the following criteria:

1. They must be an adult (18 years and older), who is an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia, or have been resident in Australia for at least three continuous years.
2. They must have been living in NSW for at least 12 months.
3. They must have at least one disease, illness or medical condition that is advanced, progressive and:
 - a. Will, on the balance of probabilities, cause their death within six months (or within 12 months for neurodegenerative diseases like motor neurone disease), and
 - b. Is causing the person suffering that cannot be relieved in a way the person considers tolerable.
4. They must have decision-making capacity in relation to voluntary assisted dying and be acting voluntarily.
5. They must have the ability to make and communicate requests and decisions about voluntary assisted dying throughout the formal request process.

When will voluntary assisted dying start in NSW?

The law comes into effect in NSW on 28 November 2023. People cannot access voluntary assisted dying in NSW before 28 November 2023.

This 18-month implementation period allows NSW Health to work with the community and a broad range of health, aged care and other stakeholders to implement the framework set out in the legislation. This is important so we can make sure voluntary assisted dying is safe, accessible and follows the law.



How will I be kept up to date on progress?

Information will be made available to the community on the NSW Health website as we get closer to the time when voluntary assisted dying will be available to eligible people.

Subscribe to our regular email updates to be notified of:

- information on key activities
- notice of events such as information sessions in the lead up to the commencement of voluntary assisted dying

Register your interest [here](#).

Mental health support

Reading information on voluntary assisted dying and thinking about end of life care can be distressing. If you need support please call:

- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 - provides telephone or online support and counselling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- NSW Mental Health line on 1800 011 511 - available to everyone in NSW and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Further information

- [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022](#)
- [Bill and debate - Parliament NSW](#)
- [What will happen during the implementation phase](#)
- [NSW Health's role in implementing voluntary assisted dying](#)

