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| Getting information from your doctor about voluntary assisted dying |
| Information for people considering voluntary assisted dying |

This factsheet is about getting information from your doctor about voluntary assisted dying. The information in this factsheet is also available as part of the comprehensive guide [*Voluntary assisted dying – Information for people considering voluntary assisted dying*](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information)<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information>.

# Summary

You should speak to a doctor or other health practitioner when you are thinking about voluntary assisted dying.

* You should only discuss voluntary assisted dying face to face with your doctor or other health practitioner.
* Only you can start a conversation about voluntary assisted dying with your doctor or registered health practitioner; they cannot talk about it unless you raise it first.
* Not all doctors and other health practitioners want to participate in voluntary assisted dying. They may suggest another health practitioner for you to see, or you can contact a voluntary assisted dying care navigator to find someone who can help you.

# Talking with your doctor or health practitioner

Dealing with the experience and impacts of advanced disease and getting near the end of your life is often very difficult, both physically and emotionally. If you are thinking about asking for voluntary assisted dying, you should discuss this with your doctor (GP or specialist) or another trusted health practitioner (such as a nurse).

You should only discuss voluntary assisted dying face to face with your doctor or other health practitioner. Doctors and other health practitioners cannot discuss voluntary assisted dying with you over the phone, email or the internet.

There are some good reasons to talk to your doctor or health practitioner if you are thinking about voluntary assisted dying:

* They can help you explore why you are thinking about voluntary assisted dying.
* They can give you more information about your disease, treatment, advance care planning and palliative care options.
* They can suggest other supports to help you manage your wellbeing (such as home help, equipment and aids, emotional and financial support).
* They can answer your questions about voluntary assisted dying and care at the end of life.

They can explain what you need to do if you decide to make the first request (see [Step 1: Make the first request](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/voluntary-assisted-dying-process/process-to-follow) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/voluntary-assisted-dying-process/process-to-follow>) to seek voluntary assisted dying.

# You need to start the conversation

Only you can start the conversation with your doctor or health practitioner about voluntary assisted dying; the law says they cannot give you information about it unless you ask first. See ‘Talking with your doctor about voluntary assisted dying’ for ways to raise voluntary assisted dying with your doctor or health practitioner.

Asking for information does not mean you have started the process. [[The process](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/voluntary-assisted-dying-process/process-to-follow)](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/voluntary-assisted-dying-process/process-to-follow) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/voluntary-assisted-dying-process/process-to-follow> only starts when you have made your decision and make the first request. Getting information is a way to help you get the facts you need to make a decision about voluntary assisted dying, if and when you are ready.

If you decide you do want to seek voluntary assisted dying, you will need to make the first request. Only a doctor can help you with this. But even once you have made your first request and started the process, you can change your mind at any time, up until the moment when you take the medication.

# Some doctors and health practitioners do not agree with voluntary assisted dying

Not all doctors or other health practitioners agree with voluntary assisted dying. They do not have to discuss this option with you if they do not want to. If your doctor or health practitioner will not discuss voluntary assisted dying with you, they may suggest another health practitioner who can help you. If they do not, you can contact a voluntary assisted dying care navigator who will assist you (See [[Voluntary assisted dying care navigators](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/getting-support)](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/getting-support) <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/voluntary-assisted-dying/community-consumer-information/getting-support> for more information). A voluntary assisted dying care navigator is a health practitioner whose role is to support people who need information about voluntary assisted dying or assistance going through the process.

**Contact:** email the voluntary assisted dying care navigator at Peter Mac <vadcarenavigator@petermac.org> or call **(03) 8559 5823** or **0436 848 344**.

# After you have talked to your doctor or health practitioner about voluntary assisted dying

**After talking with your doctor – or at any point when you feel you have enough information, and have decided to seek voluntary assisted dying – the next step is to make the first request to your doctor.**

You may make a first request for voluntary assisted dying at the first appointment or you may need more than one visit to your doctor or health practitioner before you feel you have enough information about voluntary assisted dying. You can keep meeting with them and asking questions until you feel comfortable to make a decision (if at all).

If your doctor or health practitioner does not want to give you information about voluntary assisted dying, and they have suggested another doctor or health practitioner to talk to, you may want to make an appointment with that person. Otherwise, you can contact a voluntary assisted dying care navigator who can link you with a doctor or health practitioner who will assist you.

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