



Summary of the Medical Aid in Dying Process

(aka The End of Life Option Act or Death with Dignity)

Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) gives competent adults with a terminal condition the ability to obtain a prescription for medication that would allow them to die quickly and peacefully. Many people who are dying want more control over how and when they die, and who will be with them at the time of their death. Medical Aid in Dying offers them the control they are seeking.

Medical Aid in Dying provides an option. A choice. The person who obtains the MAID prescription gets to decide if and when they will take the medication. No one will ever encourage or demand that they take it. Many people never take the medication, though they experience greater peace of mind knowing they have the option.

At Integrated MD Care (IMDC), we are fully committed to helping people have the most possible control over their life, and their death. When the California End of Life Option Act went into effect in June of 2016, making it legal for doctors to support Medical Aid in Dying, we made the decision to help qualifying individuals go through the process. Since 2016 it has been our honor to help many patients and families avail themselves of this compassionate option. People seek out our support for two primary reasons: because they can't find other physicians to help them, and/or because we have developed an excellent reputation for swiftly and expertly navigating patients and families through the Medical Aid in Dying process.

To qualify for Medical Aid in Dying in California a person must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be considered a resident of California
- Be mentally competent with decision making capacity
- Have a terminal condition with a life-expectancy of six months or less
- Be able to ingest the medication of their own volition (acceptable methods of ingestion include swallowing, administration through a gastric tube or a rectal tube)

The requirements necessary to obtain a prescription for the MAID medication are:

- Make two face-to-face verbal requests for MAID to an Attending Physician (the verbal requests must be separated by at least 48 hours)
- Sign and date a Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug form and have the signature witnessed by two people
- Be assessed by a second independent physician, the Consulting Physician, who must complete and submit the Consulting Physician form
- Request to the Attending Physician that the MAID prescription be submitted to a participating pharmacy

We understand that many patients and loved ones experience high levels of stress and anxiety, and may be going through anticipatory grief as they explore and navigate the Medical Aid in Dying process. To provide additional psycho-spiritual and emotional support through this journey, we offer a complimentary counseling session with our Spiritual Director, Elizabeth Uslander, MSW, MTS, for our patients or loved ones. You can learn more about Elizabeth and her unique model of care at www.VoyagesLLC.com.

The following pages will cover the details of the process, and address many of the questions that come up for patients and families. Some of what is shared here may already have been discussed with you, but we offer it in writing so you can refer back to it whenever you need to.

After the first request for a prescription for Medical Aid in Dying medication has been made, what's next?

1. If it hasn't already happened, you will be contacted by an IMDC representative, who will provide instructions for filling out and returning our practice intake documents, including the:

- Patient Registration Form
- Privacy/HIPAA document
- Consent to Receive and Share Medical Information
- Consent for Care Form
- Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug form

2. You may view and complete the documents on our website (www.integratedMDCare.com) or can receive them in person, by email, by fax or by US mail. If completing paper forms, the documents can be emailed to info@integratedmdcare.com, faxed to 858-281-4977, or mailed to:

Integrated MD Care
4840 Tarantella Lane
San Diego, CA 92130

3. All forms, with the exception of the Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug form, can be filled out and signed by either the patient or by the person who is the Medical Power of Attorney for Healthcare for the patient. The Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug Form must be signed by the patient, though it can be filled out and dated by another person.

4. The signing of the Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug form by the patient must be witnessed by two people. Only one of the witnesses may be (but does not need to be) a relative of the patient or a beneficiary of their estate. Neither the attending nor the consulting physician may serve as a witness. Representatives of hospice agencies, home care agencies, residential care facilities and nursing homes may or may not be allowed by their employer to serve as a witness, though they are not specifically excluded from doing so by the law.

5. If our physician is serving as the Attending/Prescribing Physician, our staff may contact any of your current or recent physicians and try to get their consent to be the Consulting Physician. If they agree, we will provide them with the necessary form and ensure that they know how to complete and return it to us properly. We will follow up as needed to ensure that the form is completed and returned in a timely fashion. We will not influence them in any way- we will

merely facilitate getting the forms to them and from them and help them understand their role.

6. If none of your physicians are willing to be the Consulting Physician, we will attempt to help you find an independent physician who will perform an evaluation and determine for themselves whether you qualify for the EOLOA. In order to reduce your burden and increase efficiency, we may help coordinate the visit with the Consulting Physician, and will provide them with the necessary form and ensure that they know how to complete and return it to us properly.

7. You will be contacted by an IMDC representative regarding a time and date for a follow-up appointment to make the second verbal request. There must be a minimum of 48 hours between the first and second verbal requests to the Attending/Prescribing physician. **Please note that in most cases the time from initiating the MAID process to obtaining the MAID medication will be 7-14 days, though could be shorter or longer depending on the circumstances.**

8. After A) the two verbal requests have been made, B) the Consulting Physician form is completed and returned to our office, and C) the Written Request For an Aid in Dying Drug form is completed and returned to our office, the prescription for the Medical Aid in Dying medication can be submitted to the pharmacy. **The prescription will not be submitted to the pharmacy until you contact our office and request that it be submitted.**

9. Once the prescription has been submitted to the pharmacy, you may request that it be filled and delivered right away, though our strong recommendation is to leave the prescription unfilled until you are getting close to the time of ingesting it. There is typically a turnaround time of approximately 24 hours for the pharmacy to fill and deliver the prescription, depending on weekends and holidays. If you anticipate that you will want the prescription delivered as soon as possible after the second verbal request has been made, please advise our office of this as soon as possible (prior to the second request visit) so we can communicate with the pharmacy in advance and do our best to accommodate this.

10. When you decide to have the prescription filled and the medication delivered, you should contact pharmacist Angela Forcucci at Advance Care Pharmacy at 760- 489-7077 to make arrangements for payment (they will accept a credit card or a certified check) and give instructions for delivery. If the Medical Aid in Dying medication is going to be delivered to, or picked up by, anyone other than the patient, the pharmacy will need to receive verbal or written consent by the patient for this person to take possession of the medication.

11. Once the prescription has been submitted to the pharmacy, we will try to help facilitate, but we have no further influence over the process of getting the prescription filled. All financial transactions for medications are strictly between the patient, or the patient's representative, and the pharmacy. Integrated MD Care has no influence over the cost of the medication, and no portion of the payment for the medication comes to us.

12. If you choose to have the prescription filled and the Medical Aid in Dying medication delivered, it must be kept in an extremely secure location, out of reach of children or anyone who might be tempted to steal or use it. If it is lost or stolen, it can not be replaced.

13. In addition to the Medical Aid in Dying medication, if the medication is going to be consumed orally, you will receive two anti-nausea medications that are to be taken 45-90 minutes before ingesting the Aid in Dying medication. Usually this consists of 8 mg Zofran (Ondansetron) and 20 mg Reglan (Metoclopramide.) Other options may be considered in some settings.

14. If you are unable to swallow liquids adequately, the medication can be administered through a gastric tube or a rectal tube and will be equally effective. If this is a concern, please let us know and we will discuss it in detail.

On the day of ingestion

It is best if you have no food, and just a bit of water, for at least 6 hours before taking the Medical Aid in Dying medication. This way there is nothing in your stomach to interfere with the medication being absorbed, and the chances of becoming nauseated are reduced. It is also best to eat light meals the day prior.

Approximately 1 hour before the Medical Aid in Dying medication is to be taken, 8 mg Zofran (Ondansetron) tablet and 20 mg Reglan (Metoclopramide) tablets should be taken with small sips of water. If these are not already in the home, they will be included with the prescription. The Medical Aid in Dying medication should be consumed no sooner than 30 minutes and no later than 2 hours of taking the Zofran and Reglan, if at all possible.

Just prior to ingestion, the Medical Aid in Dying medication, which is in powder form, is to be dissolved in 2 ounces of water or apple juice (preferably unfiltered).

When ready to drink the mixture, you should sit on the bed or recliner, or wherever you prefer to be. It's best not to try to walk after drinking the mixture.

Once you start drinking the medication, you must finish it within 2 minutes. Otherwise you may become too sleepy to finish the entire amount.

After finishing the medication you can take a few swallows of juice or something you like the taste of. A spoonful of sorbet or a popsicle are also good options.

Some people experience discomfort or burning in the mouth, throat or stomach after drinking the mixture. While it is always a possibility, none of my patients have complained of nausea or had any complications.

After several minutes you will fall into a deep sleep. Once asleep, it is highly unlikely that you will experience any discomfort or be aware of what is going on around you, though loved ones are encouraged to speak out loud and provide comforting touch in case there is some degree of awareness.

Death typically occurs within 30 minutes- 2 hours. In some cases death may occur more quickly, or may be delayed for several hours. It is very difficult to predict how long it will take for any individual patient to die. We believe that patients do not experience any pain or discomfort throughout this process.

After death has occurred

If the patient is on hospice, and a representative from hospice is not present, the hospice agency should be contacted and the death reported. Unless an attending physician, or a nurse being supervised by the attending physician, is present to confirm the time of death, a hospice nurse will be dispatched to confirm death and assist with any additional needs, such as calling the mortuary or crematorium. There is no rush to call and have the body removed. This can, and should, be done in a time frame that is comfortable for everyone. Take the time to be with your loved one if you wish, and then make the call when you feel ready.

If the patient is not on hospice, it would be best to have a doctor or nurse present, both for moral support, as well as to confirm the time of death and report it to the mortuary or crematorium.

For patients who are NOT on hospice at the time the Medical Aid in Dying medication is taken, it would be best for the patient or a family member to contact the chosen mortuary, crematorium or donation organization to advise them that death is likely in the next few days and confirm that they will be able to pick up the body without the medical examiner being involved, as long as there is a physician or a nurse present to confirm the time of death. Our office can take care of this step if requested. Each county has its own policies regarding the handling of Medical Aid in Dying deaths.

What is the medication?

Currently, there is only one medication combination we prescribe for Medical Aid in

Dying. It is referred to as **DDMAPh**

It is a combination of Digoxin, Diazepam, Morphine, Amitriptyline and Phenobarbital. It was developed by a group of physicians and pharmacists who have collected data in search of the most effective and relatively affordable medication.

The DDMAPh comes in powder form. All of the medications are already combined by the pharmacy. The powder should be mixed with 3 to 4 ounces of water or apple juice and stirred until uniformly dissolved just prior to ingestion. The total volume of mixture is 4 to 5 ounces. The cost of a DDMAPh prescription is approximately \$700.