

Talking with your Physician about Aid in Dying



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Many people feel anxious about talking to their physicians about hastening an imminent death. If you discuss this choice early in the course of your illness, you are more likely to have time to ensure that your end-of-life options are consistent with your values.

No one but you can make this request to your physicians. Do not make the request to a member of your physician's office staff.

Here are our suggestions for discussions with your physicians.

Language for someone who is *not* terminal:

I want to live with as much quality as I can for as long as I can. If I am no longer able to find meaning in life after trying all other reasonable options, I would like to have the option of using the Oregon Physician Aid-in-Dying Law.

I hope you will honor my decisions and respect my values, as I respect yours. Will you write a lethal prescription in accordance with Oregon's Physician Aid-in-Dying law when death is imminent? If you will never be willing to honor my request, please tell me now.

Language for someone who is terminal:

I want to have the legal option of hastening my imminent death if my suffering becomes unbearable. Will you write a lethal prescription in accordance with Oregon's Physician Aid-in-Dying law?

If you will not write the prescription, are you willing to certify that I am eligible to use the law? (This is the role of the Consulting Physician.)

Mention that *Compassion & Choices* provides assistance to physicians who are willing to participate. Please give your physicians our phone number and website.

Regardless of your physician's response, remember to ask him or her to record your request in your medical record.

Dying peacefully takes a little work. To have a good death, you need to be your own forceful advocate.