

Choosing your contact person

Voluntary assisted dying

After making an administration decision, you will need to appoint a contact person.

Your coordinating doctor cannot prescribe the voluntary assisted dying substance until you have appointed a contact person.

The contact person has an important role, and you should choose someone you think will be able to handle the responsibility, in the days prior to and after your death.

Eligibility

Your contact person must:

- be 18 years or older
- agree to act as your contact person.

Your contact person can be:

- a family member
- a friend or carer
- your partner or spouse
- a healthcare worker involved in your care
- any person you trust to take on the role.

If you cannot find someone, you should speak to your coordinating or consulting doctor.

Appointing a contact person

To appoint a contact person, you must:

- fill in the *Contact Person Appointment Form* with your contact person
- give the completed form to your coordinating doctor.

Your coordinating doctor will give you a copy of this form. You do not need to complete the *Contact Person Appointment Form* in the presence of your coordinating doctor.

If possible, it would be useful for your contact person to accompany you to an appointment with your coordinating doctor to ask any questions they have.

Role of a contact person

The role of your contact person is different based on whether you make a self-administration or a practitioner administration decision.

Your contact person doesn't need to be present during voluntary assisted dying substance administration.

Note: The contact person role is different to other statutory roles, for example:

- enduring power of attorney
- statutory health attorney
- general power of attorney.

The contact person has distinct responsibilities.

Provide information to the Review Board

The Review Board reviews each completed voluntary assisted dying case to ensure compliance with the Act.

The Review Board can contact your contact person any time after your death for more information. For example, to ask about your experience in being a contact person or feedback to improve the process.

Self-administration

For a self-administration decision your contact person must:

- if there is any unused or remaining substance, give it to an authorised disposer (pharmacist)
- tell your coordinating doctor when you have died
- if asked, provide information to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (the Review Board).

Return of the voluntary assisted dying substance

Your contact person will be responsible for returning any unused substance to an authorised disposer. The voluntary assisted dying substance **MUST** be safely returned to a pharmacist if you:

- revoke your self-administration decision by:
 - deciding you no longer want to take the voluntary assisted dying substance
 - changing your mind and wanting to consider if a doctor or nurse will administer a voluntary assisted dying substance to you
- self-administer the voluntary assisted dying substance and there is some unused or remaining substance.
- die from another cause, before taking any voluntary assisted dying substance.

The Review Board will provide your contact person with information about how to return a voluntary assisted dying substance and the support services available to help them.

If they do not receive this information from the Review Board after you have appointed them as contact person, you or your contact person should advise the person's coordinating doctor or the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying (QVAD) Support and Pharmacy Service.

Tell your coordinating doctor that you have died

Your contact person does not need to be in the room when you self-administer the substance. However, they must tell your coordinating doctor if you die from the voluntary assisted dying substance or another cause. Your contact person must do this within two business days of becoming aware of your death.

If you make a self-administration decision you will be encouraged not to self-administer alone. However, if you do choose to be alone an appropriate plan should be put in place to ensure your contact person can complete their role.

It is the legal responsibility of the contact person to return any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance to a pharmacy. The pharmacy will ensure the substance is safely disposed of.

This **MUST** be done **as soon as possible**, and in all circumstances within 14 days after the day:

- you die (if there is any unused or remaining substance), OR
- you revoke your self-administration decision.

If the substance is not returned, significant financial penalties may apply.

A staff member from QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service may contact your contact person within the 14-day period to remind them about their responsibility to return the voluntary assisted dying substance.

MORE INFORMATION

health.qld.gov.au/vad

Practitioner administration

For a practitioner administration decision your contact person's role includes:

- acting as a point of contact for the Review Board
- informing your coordinating doctor if you die by a cause other than the administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance.

Change of contact person

Your contact person can change their mind and withdraw from their role as your contact person. They should let you know that they have changed their mind.

You can also change your mind about who you want to be your contact person. If you change your mind, you should tell the person that you have changed your mind.

If this happens you will need to:

- appoint another contact person
- tell your coordinating doctor that you have a new contact person
- complete a new *Contact Person Appointment Form*.

Legal protections

There are protections in the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* for people who assist a person accessing voluntary assisted dying. This means that your contact person will not be breaking any laws in Queensland by carrying out their responsibilities as a contact person.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service (QVAD SPS)

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service is a statewide service that supports the delivery of voluntary assisted dying across Queensland.

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service ensures all eligible Queenslanders seeking access to voluntary assisted dying, and those involved in their care, receive compassionate, professional, safe, and timely support.

QVAD Support and Pharmacy Service

- **Phone: 1800 431 371**
Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4pm
(excluding public holidays)
- **Email: QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au**