



# Ethics

## Forgoing Medical Therapy

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### Definitions

<b>Artificially-provided nutrition or hydration</b>	An artificial means to convey food into the body such as an intravenous infusion, nasogastric (NG) or percutaneous enteral gastrostomy (PEG) tube. The nutrition and hydration provided via these means are not artificial, but generally are in liquid forms. In contrast, a special feeding spoon, bottle, or diet designed to reduce the risk of choking are not considered artificial means.
<b>Assisted suicide</b>	To assist another to take his or her life by providing the means to accomplish his or her death; e.g., a loaded gun or a type and quantity of prescription medication that will result in death.
<b>Double effect</b>	Derives from Catholic theology and distinguishes between intent and consequences. It holds that when an act has two foreseeable effects (such as pain relief and suppression of respirations) it is ethical to provide the act if one's intent is the good effect not the bad.
<b>Euthanasia</b>	A general term derived from the Greek eu, well, + thanatos, death, or "good death." Currently used broadly to refer to the act of causing a painless death for a person or animal.
<b>Involuntary euthanasia</b>	The act of painlessly killing another person without the person's expressed permission or even without their prior knowledge.
<b>Killing</b>	An action, whether intentional or accidental, that results in another person's death.
<b>Mechanical ventilation</b>	The use of a machine to support a patient's pulmonary status by ensuring adequate lung inflation via an endotracheal or tracheostomy tube. (Note that the correct term for these machines is ventilators, not respirators: ventilation is the expansion of the lungs with air while respiration is the exchange of O <sub>2</sub> and CO <sub>2</sub> at the membrane level.)
<b>Mercy killing</b>	Lay term used to describe cases where someone kills another person out of "compassion" or mercy such as when the person is in unremitting pain.
<b>PAS</b>	Physician-assisted suicide: a patient requests assistance from his or her doctor to commit suicide.
<b>Physician-assisted</b>	Patient requests assistance from his or her doctor to commit suicide.

**suicide**

**Terminal sedation** Sedation for intractable distress in the dying.

**Voluntary euthanasia** The act of painlessly killing another person at that person's request or with the person's informed consent.

**Withdrawing therapy** To withdraw therapy means that the therapy has already been initiated in the care of a patient, regardless of whether the therapy is continuously administered (such as mechanical ventilation) or intermittently utilized (such as antibiotics, hemodialysis, or blood transfusions).

**Withholding therapy** To withhold therapy implies that the therapy will not be initiated, e.g., examples include not attempting CPR in the event of an arrest or not initiating hemodialysis in spite of increasing renal failure.