

Preparing Families for Euthanasia

We know this is a very difficult time for you and your family and our goal is to make this process as peaceful for you and your pet as we can.

Would you like to stay with your pet?

- Some owners do not wish to present for any part of the euthanasia process, and that is fine
- Some owners wish to stay for the first injection of sedation medication and be with their pet while they become relaxed and sleepy, but leave before the second injection that puts them to sleep
- Some owners wish to stay for both sedation and the second injection that puts your pet to sleep

Have you ever witnessed a euthanasia before?

-if not, we can talk you through what to expect beforehand or at your appointment

When you arrive:

- You'll be brought into a room (or out to the lawn if performing euthanasia outside) with your pet
- A technician will discuss your aftercare wishes for your pet (cremation, home burial, pawprint, engraving options for private cremations, etc)
- A receptionist will take payment for services before we begin the euthanasia process for your pet
- You can bring along any special foods they love to feed them here and a blanket or special toy that smells like home that they can lay on or with while they get sleepy

Sedation:

- First we will give your pet an injection to relax them and make them very sleepy
- This does occasionally sting a little but it is over quickly and we can distract them with petting or food during this injection
- Sedation takes effect in approximately 5-10 minutes and you can pet and hold or talk to your pet while they become sleepy, and you can feed them if they want to eat, until they become too sleepy to eat
- They may snore or their tongue may stick out once they are very relaxed

IV catheter:

- Once your pet is relaxed and sleepy, the technician will place an IV catheter in a front or back leg vein
- You will be present to pet and talk to your pet during IV catheter placement

Euthanasia:

- The doctor will give the second injection(s) through the IV catheter into a vein
- You can hold your pet during this injection as well, or hold their head in your lap if you wish, and you can talk to your pet while we give the second injection
- This is a dose of anesthesia medication and it makes them so sleepy that they do not wake up; there is no pain or discomfort from this injection
- The injection is given over approximately 30 seconds and in most cases, your pet's heartbeat will be very very slow or will have stopped by the time we are done giving the injection
- We will listen to your pet's heart after the injection is given and we will let you know when they have passed away (no heartbeat present)

After your pet's passing:

- Your pet's eyes most often stay open (their eyes do not close)
- Your pet may pass some urine or feces as their body relaxes
- You personally may experience an emotional outburst or release after they are gone, this is normal and please do not feel shy or embarrassed to cry in front of us
- Some owners wish to leave pretty quickly after their pet has passed; however, if you wish, you can take several minutes to be with your pet after they pass, petting and loving on them, and continuing to say your goodbyes; please take any time you'd like to collect yourself before leaving the room, there is no need to rush.

Aftercare:

- You may take your pet home for burial (be sure to check local regulations regarding burial, and bury your pet deeply enough that other animals and birds of prey do not have access to the body (as the medication we use for euthanasia would also be fatal if ingested by other animals)
- You may leave your pet with us for burial
- You may have your pet cremated- either with other pets and there is no ash return; or privately cremated and you receive your pet's ashes back
- For private cremations: your pet's ashes are returned in a cedar box with optional engraving or you can select an urn or a necklace that contains some of your pet's ashes

In Memory:

- Our cremation service offers a wide range of pet memorials such as ceramic, polymer or glass pawprints (for burial, group or privately cremated pets) and selection of urns and necklaces for privately cremated pets
- Our staff will make you an ink nose or paw print or clip a lock of your pet's fur for you to take with you at the end of your visit if you would like (this is optional)
- We have a list of memorials you can make or purchase to honor your pet's memory that we can email to you

Pet Loss Support Resources:

- We have a list of pet loss support resources to assist you and your family after your pet's passing, we can email this to you.