

Information Sheet

Euthanasia

This information sheet is designed to try and answer some questions you may have about the subjects of death or euthanasia of your pet.

Death should not be something to be afraid of and hopefully we can help supply some answers to make the process a less distressing time for both you and your pet.

How do I know if my pet needs to be euthanased?

Your pet will be examined by the vet and consideration of physical and mental wellbeing and quality of life will lead the vet to recommend euthanasia or not.

The decision however is always the owner's and the vet will always try and accommodate owner's wishes if for example a different time when other family members can be present would be preferred.

What happens?

First you will be asked to sign a "consent form for euthanasia" - only people over 18yrs old can sign these forms.

Euthanasia is carried out by giving an overdose of anaesthetic, usually into a vein on the front leg or sometimes by injection into the abdomen. A nurse will assist the vet with this but you can still hold your pet throughout.

As the drug is given your pet will quickly become unconscious, lie down and go limp, breathing and heart beats also soon cease, at this point your pet has died.

After death your pet may empty bladder and bowels, some gasp 3 or 4 times and muscle twitching may be seen. Dogs and cats do not close their eyes after death unlike people.

Will it hurt?

No. The only discomfort for your pet is the prick of the needle and most animals are not distressed by this.

Do I have to stay during euthanasia?

No. Some owners prefer to stay goodbye before euthanasia, some prefer to not see the actual euthanasia but like to see their pet after death and some owners prefer to stay throughout.

You should choose whatever you are comfortable with and the vets and nurses will always try to fit in with your wishes.

What happens afterwards?

There are some choices to make after euthanasia - you can either take your pet home for burial, or leave your pet with us for cremation . If your pet is cremated the ashes can be scattered **or** returned to you in a wooden casket bearing the pet's name.

Can euthanasia be carried out at home?

Yes. However unless nursing staff are available to go with the vet we may need the owner to help hold the pet during euthanasia. Also we are unable to bring the pet back to the surgery afterwards and so you may need to make arrangements to bring the body to the surgery or arrange with the crematorium for collection.

Euthanasia at the surgery.

We will always try to see animals which have come to surgery for euthanasia immediately so please let the receptionists know if you come to surgery for this. Otherwise let us know you are coming by 'phone or you can 'phone and arrange a time outside normal surgery hours to lessen any wait or distress.

Ideally payment for euthanasia should be made at the time of the procedure, and as afterwards you will naturally be upset we will arrange payment before the event or in the consulting room whichever you would find easiest.

All the veterinary and nursing staff at the practice are used to dealing with euthanasia and will answer any queries you may have. Please do not feel embarrassed to ask any questions, as this is a time when it is most important that you understand what is happening and why.

Lastly please do think about euthanasia and cremation well before they are likely to be necessary as at the time making decisions is made more difficult by the extreme emotions we all experience at the time of loss of a loved pet. If you have already decided what you want to happen at least this stress is removed from the event.