



# Euthanasia

If you are facing the decision to euthanize a pet, you are probably experiencing many emotions. It is never easy to say goodbye to your beloved friend. Consider speaking with your veterinarian to carefully go over the process they currently use. It is important to have a clear understanding of the procedure and what to expect.



## SCHEDULING THE APPOINTMENT

When scheduling, request a specific time when the clinic is at its quietest or has few appointments booked. This way, time can be dedicated to you and your pet. This also gives you more privacy with fewer people around during your time of grief.

## FILL OUT THE PAPERWORK

The law states that owners must give written, signed consent for any euthanasia procedure performed on a pet. There may be additional paperwork should you choose cremation. Making the decision prior to the procedure is highly recommended to think about your options. For example, choosing to get your pet's ashes back in a special urn. Ask your veterinary clinic to see your urn options.

## IF POSSIBLE, YOU'LL BE TAKEN TO A QUIET PLACE TO WAIT

If the clinic only has one waiting room, you may have to wait with other clients before your appointment. However, if the clinic has consult rooms or even a 'grieving room' specifically designed for this, you will most likely be taken to wait in privacy for the veterinarian.

## THE PROCEDURE

In a veterinary clinic, pets are euthanized through the use of an IV solution. An IV catheter and/or sedatives may be used. Occasionally, your veterinarian will not be able to inject the drug into one of the animal's leg veins. There are many reasons this may occur such as the animal is in shock that the leg veins are collapsed and too small to access, the animal is too aggressive to permit the veterinarian safe access to a vein, or the animal is far too small for a vein to be entered. In these cases, the euthanasia solution will be administered using other methods.



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## COMMON QUESTIONS

### **Is euthanasia painful?**

The only discomfort felt by the animal might be the insertion of the needle or catheter into their vein.

### **Is euthanasia instant?**

Euthanasia solution generally produces unconsciousness within minutes and sometimes seconds. Your veterinarian will listen for a heartbeat using a stethoscope and pronounce the pet deceased when the heart stops.

### **What can I expect to see happen as my pet passes?**

After the animal passes away, there are specific events and signs that you might witness. They may display intermittent gasps after the heart has stopped. Termed 'agonal breathing,' these gasps occur because the animal's heart has stopped beating and the diaphragm of the animal contracts spasmodically as the animal's brain and muscles are shutting down. They may also urinate and/or defecate. The most important thing to remember is that these events are normal and are not painful for your pet.

### **Will my pet's eyes close?**

A pet's eyes usually remain open after it has been euthanized.