

# EUTHANASIA

Euthanasia is one of the most difficult things owners have to face at the end of their beloved pet's life. Euthanasia is one of the kindest things we can do to end a pet's suffering. Although euthanasia is often thought of as an emotional burden, it can also be thought of as a gift. Many veterinarians feel that their right to bestow a peaceful, dignified death on a suffering animal is a privilege beyond value. We help animals die with dignity and without pain. Thus, with euthanasia, veterinarians provide a noble service to pets and their owners.

There is no right or wrong answer regarding the question of when to euthanize. Euthanasia should be performed when an owner perceives that their pet's quality of life has decreased. Things to watch for in your pet's behavior or routine to let you know when it's time to euthanize include inappetance, intractable vomiting or diarrhea, inability to get around, hiding, decreased socialization behavior, and pain. The animals often let their owners know when they are ready for euthanasia. If there is any question about when to euthanize, please don't hesitate to call us and discuss the situation.

After you realize that the time for your pet's euthanasia is near, it is helpful to do as much planning and preparing ahead of time as possible. The purpose of the following list is to make you aware of the choices you have about your pet's death.

1. Ask your veterinarian to describe the methods and details of the euthanasia procedure.
2. Decide whether or not to be present during your pet's euthanasia.
3. Decide who else (if anyone) you would like to have present during the euthanasia.
4. Plan the logistical details of your pet's euthanasia.
  - When should it take place?
  - Where should it take place?
  - How will you care for your pet's body?
  - If your pet is cremated, do you want its ashes back?
  - What will you transport/bury your pet's body in if you take it with you?
5. Consider a post-mortem examination. Postmortems can potentially answer the questions you may have regarding your pet's illness or injury.
6. Think about how you want to say goodbye or memorialize your pet.

When an animal is euthanized, they are given a euthanasia solution intravenously that rapidly stops breathing and the heart, death occurs in a matter of seconds. Basically, they are given an overdose of an anesthetic. They do not feel any pain. Sometimes a tranquilizer is given beforehand to facilitate a smooth process, depending on the situation and the owner's wishes. Please feel free to call us and discuss your wishes in regards to euthanizing your beloved pet.

## **Support Services:**

Losing a pet may be a very devastating and painful experience. There are support groups available in which you and others meet with a professional facilitator to help you heal by sharing feelings and experiences of loss and grief. The Pet Loss Support Group meets every Thursday 6:30-8:00 pm at the Denver Area Veterinary Medical Society Office at 191 Yuma St., Denver, CO 80203, (303)318-0447, second floor board room at the NE entrance to Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation – Harrison Center for Animals.

There are web sites that can help as well.

[www.humananimalbondtrust.org](http://www.humananimalbondtrust.org)

[www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu](http://www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu)

[www.aplb.org](http://www.aplb.org)

[www.petloss.com](http://www.petloss.com)

[www.pet-loss.net](http://www.pet-loss.net)

Also, there are pet loss support hotline numbers you can call.

(916) 752-4200-Staffed by University of California-Davis veterinary students

(614) 292-1823-Staffed by Ohio State University veterinary students

(888) 332-7738-Iams Pet Loss Support Resource Center