

Saying goodbye to a beloved pet is one of the hardest decisions we ever face. This handout is here to provide clear, compassionate information to help you during this difficult time.

### What Does "Euthanasia" Mean?

Euthanasia literally means "good death." It is a way to peacefully and painlessly help a pet pass away when their quality of life is poor and suffering outweighs comfort. It is a final act of love that prevents unnecessary pain.

### How Do I Know When It's Time?

Deciding when "it's time" is deeply personal, but some signs may help guide you:

- Difficulty eating and/or holding food down
- Urinary and/or fecal incontinence
- Difficulty breathing
- Not enjoying what he or she normally did
- Having more bad days than good

Some pets simply give up, and they lose the will to do much of anything. You might actually notice a change in their demeanor or the "light gone from their eyes". Please know, you don't have to make this decision alone. We can talk through your pet's health, quality of life, and options together. We also have a handout that can help you assess your pet's quality of life. See below.



### Can I Be with My Pet?

Yes. Many families choose to stay, but it's also okay if you cannot. Your pet is never alone and is always treated with dignity, care, and compassion. (If your pet hasn't been examined by one of our veterinarians within a year, in order to reestablish that pet as a patient, one of our doctors is required to examine and evaluate your pet. It's of utmost importance that our team agrees euthanasia is appropriate for your pet.)

### Do I Need an Appointment?

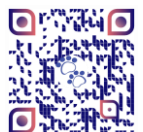
Yes, in order to make the process as peaceful as possible, if you wish to be with your pet, we do ask that you have an appointment so that our team is prepared to assist you thru. Please let us know if you need help getting into the building. (If you do not want to be with your pet, an appointment is not necessary, but we do ask that you call ahead to make sure someone is available to quickly assist your pet.)

### Where Does the Procedure Take Place?

In most instances, we go into a Comfort Room which is designed to be less "clinical" in nature and more like a natural or home environment. Each Comfort Room has a resource cart offering water, Kleenex, tools to collect a piece of your pet's hair if you so desire, and a list of grief support options.

### What Happens During the Procedure?

Although one of our assistants or technicians will assist with paperwork, a veterinarian will review the procedure & make sure you don't have any questions. The process is gentle and designed to minimize stress:



1. **Sedation (optional but often recommended):** Many pets receive a calming injection so they are relaxed and sleepy. (Some pets may also be given oral medication to be given beforehand, depending on the pet's temperament.)
2. **Euthanasia medication:** A catheter is placed in a vein. A second injection is given intravenously by the doctor that quickly and peacefully causes the heart to stop.
3. **Time with your pet:** You are welcome to stay with your pet the entire time, holding or comforting them.

The process is quick, peaceful, and painless.

### Will My Pet Feel Pain?

No. The medication works quickly, and your pet does not feel pain. If sedation is given first, your pet is already deeply relaxed or asleep before the final injection.

### What Happens After?

You will have options for your pet's remains:

🌈 **Home burial** - if allowed by local laws

🌈 **Private cremation\*** - in about a week, your pet's ashes are returned in a plain white box for you to pick up. If you choose an urn provided by Kurrus, please know that they are typically sealed so you cannot easily access any of the ashes. You may also find urn online at various retailers if you choose to transfer the ashes yourself.

🌈 **Communal cremation\*** - ashes are not returned but rather sprinkled in the memory garden at Kurrus where you can visit if so desired.

🌈 A complimentary clay paw can be made if you would like. (Additional ones can be purchased for a small fee.)

### How Can I Prepare?

☁ Bring your pet's favorite blanket, toy, or treats.

☁ Invite close family or a friend if you wish.

☁ Decide in advance about aftercare options.

### Grieving and Healing

Grief is a natural response to losing a beloved companion. Everyone grieves differently, and it may take time. Please be gentle with yourself. There are pet loss support hotlines, support groups, and grief counselors who can help.

### Questions You May Still Have



#### "Will my other pets understand?"

Other pets often sense a change. Allowing them to see and smell their companion after passing can help them adjust.

#### "What if I'm not sure?"

You don't have to decide alone. We can help assess your pet's quality of life and talk through all options. Please also see the assessment tool below.

#### "What if my pet has an emergency at home?"

If your pet is suffering suddenly and severely, call us immediately. Emergency euthanasia can be arranged to prevent prolonged distress. There are also at-home euthanasia options, including Lap of Love (<https://www.lapoflove.com/find-a-vet/Missouri/StLouis> phone: 314-827-5606), & Blue Skies (<https://www.blueskiesihs.com/> phone: 618-750-8193).



Final Thoughts

Euthanasia is never an easy choice, but it can be a final, loving gift to a pet who has given you unconditional love. Please know that our entire team is here to support you, answer questions, and provide compassionate care every step of the way.

RESOURCES:

Dog Quality of Life Assessment Tool	Cat Quality of Life Assessment Tool	Pet Loss Support Brochure	How to Know When It's Time to Say Goodbye VIDEO
