



Preparing for the End: A Guide to Euthanasia

The answers to the questions that you don't want to ask

When do I know it's time to say goodbye?

If your pet cannot have their pain managed anymore or their quality of life deteriorates then it may be the kindest thing to put them to sleep. Often people struggle to know when it's time to let go. Signs that the time has come include if your pet doesn't want to eat or drink, going to the toilet is difficult or they struggle to get up.

My pet is suffering and it's time for them to go – how do I organise things?

There are two options when it comes to having your pet put to sleep. Your pet can be seen at the clinic or alternatively a home visit can be organised. Making an appointment is the first step to make sure that the procedure is not rushed and everything can be made as comfortable as possible. Unfortunately the times of day that home visits can be organised may be limited, so those on a fixed timeline may need to have to just bring their pet to the clinic. Costs are also higher for a home visit.

What happens during euthanasia?

To put your pet 'to sleep' we give an overdose of anaesthetic. Often we will place a catheter into their vein first, making the procedure easier on older animals where their blood pressure may be poor. If your pet is easily stressed or can get aggressive we may give a sedative injection first to relax them. In rare cases where disease makes the blood vessels frail and a vein cannot be accessed, the vet may need to inject into a blood filled organ (usually the heart or the kidney). Generally it takes less than a minute for the pet to pass once the anaesthetic is given.

You do not have to be with your pet during the euthanasia if you don't feel comfortable with it. Some people prefer to keep their last memory of their pet as a more positive one, whereas other people like to be with them in their final moments. There is no right or wrong choice – it is what feels best for your family and situation.

What happens afterwards?

Saying goodbye is a very emotional time, but unfortunately there are some practicalities that need to be considered. What to do with your pet after they have passed is often one of the decisions that can be hard for people to make. The most common choice is that the family will take the pet home to be buried in the garden. The clinic can provide you with a biodegradable bag to place your pet in to be taken home. If you are in a rental property/caravan etc this is not practical, so we can organise for your pet to be buried at Woodlands Pet Cemetery at Lowood - fees for this start from \$54. If you would like a permanent memento of your beloved pet, they can be cremated and their ashes returned home in either a small wooden casket or stone urn, fees for this start from \$250.



Dealing with grief?

Our pets are a very important part of our families. Sometimes they may be the only link to another loved one who has already passed, or they may have been a constant presence during a happy childhood. It is normal to feel a sense of loss when they pass. You may feel anger or sadness and these are normal emotions to have during the grieving period. If you are struggling to come to terms with the loss of a pet, please call us at the clinic as we understand how difficult it can be to get over the parting from a loved companion.