

EUTHANASIA

In some circumstances we may suggest that you should consider having your pet "put to sleep" (euthanased) such as if your pet has a terminal illness from which he cannot recover or if he has intractable pain. This will enable your pet to die in peace with dignity and without further suffering. It can be a very hard decision to make but it is one of the kindest things that an owner can do for a suffering pet.

What happens when a pet is "put to sleep"?

The vet, with the assistance of a veterinary nurse, gives the pet an intravenous injection of a lethal dose of barbiturates (a strong anaesthetic) usually into a front leg. Sometimes the injection is made into a kidney. The pet loses consciousness within a few seconds and often gives a last gasp just before it dies. This is a very controlled and painless method of euthanasia. For very nervous pets it is sometimes necessary to give a sedative to calm them prior to euthanasia.

Is it usual for the owner to stay with their pet when it is "put to sleep"?

We are quite happy for owners to remain with their pet. Sometimes owners get very distressed and this is communicated to the pet and in this instance it may be preferable for the pet to be left with us. If the owners wish, they can see their pet after the injection has been given but many people prefer their last memory to be of their pet alive.

The decision whether or not to stay with the pet is a very personal decision which should preferably be made in advance to avoid further distress.

Can I have my pet put to sleep at home or is it better to take him to the surgery?

We do offer home visits to put your pet to sleep at home if you prefer.

The benefit of bringing your pet to the surgery is that skilled assistance and equipment is readily available. It is usually possible to arrange an appointment at the surgery at a quiet time to avoid undue distress to both pet and owner.

What can I do with my pet's remains?

There are four possible choices:-

- home burial
- cremation- the body is cremated at Rossendale Pet Crematorium where the ashes are sprinkled over 'The Garden of Remembrance'. This can be done through Evergreen.
- individual cremation with return of the pet's ashes - We can arrange this and advise you of the likely cost.
- burial in a pet cemetery - We can suggest who to contact to arrange this. It can be very expensive.

Grieving for your pet

It is very natural to feel upset and emotional when your pet dies. Don't be afraid to show your feelings in front of us. We understand. It will take time to get over your loss. It often helps to talk about your pet's death. It is quite normal to feel angry, this is part of the process of coming to terms with your loss. Try not to feel guilty or blame yourself for your pet's death. Remember that you cared for your pet and did all you could when it was ill. Vets cannot always save a pet's life. Treasure your memories. Remember the good times and what you loved most about your pet.

If you feel you have no-one to talk to about your loss you can contact the SCAS Befriender Service which will put you in touch with someone who lives near you (Tel: 0891 615285).

Helping children to cope

The death of a pet is often a child's first experience of death. Tell them the truth. Encourage them to talk about their feelings and tell them how you feel. Help them to understand that they are not to blame. Talk to them about your pet and concentrate on the good times. Your child will need time to get over the death of the pet.

Further Help

If you need any further help or advice please don't hesitate to contact us at Evergreen Vets.

