

## Dealing With Grief

Losing a Pet is Heartbreaking

Grief is always difficult and everyone responds differently.

It is important to take care of yourself during this time of pet loss. Cry. Talk to people and take time to reflect and to grieve.

Close friends and family may not fully understand your pet loss. They may not value how attached you are to your dog or cat. The bond between you and your pet may be intensely strong and lasting. It is your pet and only you know how strong the bond is between you.

Many people find comfort reading books, articles and internet pages written to help with pet loss and grief.



Our website has links to several good pet loss sites, such as:

Choosing to be with your pet during euthanasia.  
Explaining Pet Loss to Children  
How do I know when it is time?  
Pet Loss and Grief - links to private bereaving sites

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

(250) 426-8517

## When Is It Time?

Deciding when is the right time is up to you. Your veterinarian may help you to understand the seriousness of the pet's condition, but the decision of when to let go - is ultimately yours.

Our pets communicate what they need throughout their lives. When it comes to their end of life, we must truly understand what our pet is trying to tell us. We must also trust what our own hearts are telling us. Focus on what is best for your pet's comfort.

- \* It is time to let go of our beloved pets when the pet's quality of life is compromised.
- \* When the bad days outnumber the good days.
- \* If your pet does not eat, drink or sleep without shortness of breath.
- \* When your pet appears chronically uncomfortable or is appearing to have more pain than pleasure.
- \* If your pet is not aware of, or interested in what is going on around them.



Before the Procedure You May  
Want Mementoes of Your Special Pet

Please ask our staff for an ink stamp of your pet's paw print or a lock of your pet's fur.

## Euthanasia

### The Difficult Decision

Companion Animal Loss and Grief

Our pets are  
valued friends  
and important  
family members.



CRANBROOK  
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## Euthanasia is Considered For Many Reasons

Euthanasia is considered when your pet's quality of life is severely compromised. Most often the process follows natural geriatric decline. In other cases euthanasia ends the suffering from critical illness or injury. Sometimes financial means becomes the determining factor and the owner may choose to halt further treatment. Also, intolerable furniture chewing, urinating in the house or aggression are all considerations for euthanasia. As pet owners we should not feel ashamed by the choices we make.

Losing a pet, no matter what situation, can topple us into depression, anger, guilt or denial. These are all common normal experiences of grief. Eventually through all of that, you will be able to remember the good times you had with your pet.

Grief won't leave, but it should lessen - with time.



## The Process of Euthanasia

Euthanasia is painless and rapid, peaceful and humane. Our veterinarians often administer sedation before the final injection. As the life leaves your pet, muscles relax with flickers and small twitches. Sometimes your pet may gasp. Your pet's eyes may not close. Bowels and bladder may empty. When those external reactions occur, your pet is not suffering. Your pet is already gone. This is a difficult time for you and we take great care to reduce the stress as much as possible.

## Should the Pet Owner Attend the Final Moments With Their Pet?

Every owner is different and it's your choice to be with your pet or not. You may stay for that final goodbye and be with your pet during the procedure. Another option is to leave after sedation, when your pet will not be aware of your absence and will not experience anxiety. Some owners choose to wait in another room until after the euthanasia. Others require that they leave their pet at the hospital and retreat to endure their grief alone.

*We recommend that you have someone with you for emotional support and to drive you home after the procedure.*



## Should Children Attend?

Deciding who should attend the final moments with a beloved pet, is up to the entire family. Every child or other family member will respond differently.

When we live with pets, chances are we will experience pet loss several times during our lifetimes.

Often our own very first experience with death was when we were children, with the loss of a family pet. Children need to be told the truth about their pet's death and dying. The misinformation about "putting their pet to sleep" will only confuse some children. Talk about the situation in an open straightforward manner.

Or you may choose instead, to include the children in a private family ceremony after the euthanasia.

## What Will Happen to My Pet After Euthanasia?

*We Offer Several Choices for the Aftercare of Your Pet.*

- 1. Cremation With Ash Retrieval:**  
Your pet is carefully cremated and the ashes are returned to you in beautifully finished and sealed wooden box. You may be surprised that there is only a small amount of ash after the cremation.
- 2. Cremation:**  
Your pet is carefully cremated and the ashes are spread on a rural private property.
- 3. Burial:**  
Your pet is properly buried on a rural private property.
- 4. Personal Option:**  
You may take your pet's body with you for an alternate aftercare of your choice. (Note that, you may bury your pet on your own property, but check local by-laws.)

