

Humane Euthanasia Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know when it is time for euthanasia?

When thinking about how happy and healthy your pet is, it's essential to consider both your pet and your family. The decision of when to say goodbye to a beloved pet is difficult and heartbreaking. This can be an extremely challenging and emotional time. Your pet's quality of a life depends on how well they feel both physically and mentally. You may want to speak to your veterinarian about your pet's condition and whether it is the right time to consider humane euthanasia. However, you know your pet and your family best. There are many online questionnaires to help evaluate your pet's [quality of life](#) that may help with your decision-making process.

Can I be present for the euthanasia procedure?

Yes, you can choose whether you want to be present for the euthanasia procedure. You can be present for the whole procedure or just the sedation portion, depending on your preferences. You can also say goodbye and leave your pet with us for the procedure. This is a very individual decision and different family members may want to make different choices.

Will my pet be in pain during the procedure?

Our goal is to make this experience as peaceful as possible for both you and your pet. We generally administer a deep sedative first before giving the medication that will help your pet to pass away. The medication is an overdose of an anesthesia medication. It works by bringing your pet into deep anesthesia and then stopping the heart, so it does not cause any pain. There may be a brief moment of discomfort with the initial sedative injection that is similar to getting a vaccine. We will ask you to comfort your pet or give treats during this injection to reduce the stress.

Is there a limit on how many people can be present at the appointment?

There is no limit on how many people can attend the appointment. If some friends or family would like to be present to support you but do not wish to participate in the appointment, they are welcome to wait in our lobby.

Should I bring my young children?

This will differ for every family and depends on your child's age. Consider each child's emotional maturity in the decision to have them present for the entire procedure. You can also have your child attend the appointment to participate in final goodbyes but leave the room for the euthanasia procedure. Please see this guide for more information on [Preparing Children for the Loss of a Pet](#).

What are the options for aftercare?

We offer communal cremation through Gateway Pet Memorial Services. Communal cremation means your pet is cremated with other pets and the ashes are not returned to you.

We do not currently offer private cremation. Private cremation means your pet is cremated alone and the ashes are collected to be returned to you in an urn or box. If private cremation is important to your family, you will need to take the remains after the euthanasia appointment and bring them to a private veterinarian for cremation.



You can also take your pet's remains home after humane euthanasia for burial at pet cemetery or on your property. If you choose to bury your pet on your property, it is your responsibility to confirm that this is legal in your jurisdiction and follow any local ordinances. Make sure to bury the pet at least 2 feet deep to prevent the remains from being uncovered by wildlife. The euthanasia solution used can stay in your pet's body and be toxic to wildlife, so we do recommend cremation as the preferred option for aftercare.

What mementos do you offer?

We offer a hair clipping in a glass vial as a memento. We are not currently able to offer ink or clay paw prints.

How long is the appointment?

Our humane euthanasia appointments are booked for 30 minutes. However, we will never rush your family through this sensitive process. We understand that depending on the circumstances the humane euthanasia process can take longer than this. We do our best not to schedule humane euthanasia appointments right after each other so that your family can have time to use the private room to say goodbye after your pet has passed.

Do you offer in-home euthanasia?

We are not able to offer in-home euthanasia services. There are several private veterinary mobile services in the Greater Toronto Area that can offer this service.

Do you offer euthanasia for animals other than cats and dogs?

Yes, we offer humane euthanasia for small species/pocket pets in addition to cats and dogs. This includes rodents, rabbits, birds, and reptiles. We do not offer services for horses or farm animals.

For animals other than cats and dogs, you may be present to say final goodbyes but cannot be present throughout the whole procedure, as we use inhalant (gas) anesthesia to help your pet transition to general anesthesia. This is performed in the surgical area of our clinic, so we are unfortunately not able to have owners attend this part of the procedure. We can bring your pet to spend time with you both after the initial sedative is administered and after they have passed.

