

What to Expect at a Humane Euthanasia Appointment

Before Your Appointment

Once our clinic receives your request for a humane euthanasia appointment, a member of our team will be in touch to schedule your appointment and provide you with additional information to prepare for your appointment. If you need to reschedule your appointment, either due to a change in plans or a change in your pet's condition, please contact us as soon as possible and we will do our best to adjust your appointment accordingly. Please note that while we make every attempt to accommodate urgent requests, we cannot guarantee same-day euthanasia appointments.

This guide on [Preparing for the Loss of a Pet](#) can help your family get ready for the humane euthanasia appointment.

When you arrive for your appointment, park in the back of the building and enter through the side door along the laneway. If you need assistance moving your pet into the building, please send somebody into the clinic to let us know and we will come out to assist you.

For large dogs, we will ask you to have them step on the scale (if able) before entering the appointment room so that we can obtain an accurate body weight to dose the medications.

A member of our team will set you up in a private room and provide you with a consent form to complete. If you have any questions about this form or whether to move forward with the procedure, you may wait until the veterinarian comes in before completing the consent form.

During Your Appointment

One of our veterinarians will come in to meet your pet and your family. We will discuss the concerns that have led you to seek a humane euthanasia appointment and confirm that this decision is the right one for your pet and your family. We can provide a quality-of-life consultation and a physical examination of your pet to help confirm that euthanasia is appropriate, but we are unable to offer any additional testing for your pet's health concerns at this time. If you would like further testing for your pet, this will need to be obtained through your private veterinarian. The veterinarian will talk through what to expect from the humane euthanasia procedure and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

A medical staff member will then weigh your pet or estimate a weight if your pet is unable to stand. A sedative injection for your pet will then be prepared. At this time, a member of our front desk team will come in to collect payment for the services.

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.

A sedative injection will then be administered into a muscle in your pet's leg or back. This is a heavy sedative that is meant to produce deep sedation or even general anesthesia. This sedative will take about 5-10 minutes to work. Then a medication called pentobarbital will be administered



into the vein. This medication will help your pet to pass away and will work quite quickly, within just a few minutes. Alternatively, depending on your pet's health condition and temperament, an intravenous catheter (IV line) may be placed before giving a sedative to ensure access to your pet's vein. They would then give a sedative medication into the vein, followed by the pentobarbital.

In pets who are geriatric or debilitated, the veins may be weak or small and it may be challenging to get access to a vein to administer the euthanasia medication. Multiple veins may need to be tried, but your pet will be under deep sedation so that they are not experiencing any pain, stress, or discomfort due to the needle. If a vein cannot be accessed, there are alternative ways to give the euthanasia medication that are just as peaceful and painless but may take longer to work. If this is needed, you will be talked through the process and what will be done to administer the euthanasia medication.

Depending on your pet's age and health condition it is possible that they could pass away with just the sedative. If this happens, that is ok. It is still like your pet went under anesthesia and did not wake up. If we think your pet is passing away under sedation, we will let you know.

After the euthanasia medication has been given, we will confirm that your pet has passed away by checking that there is no longer a heartbeat and let you know that they have passed. After death, the pet may urinate or defecate, and the eyes will remain open. Pets may take a few big deep breaths even after they have passed. These are normal reflex breaths and are a sign of the body settling into death.

After Your Appointment

Once your pet has passed away, you can choose to spend additional time in the private room to say goodbye, or you can leave right away. This is a very individual decision and different family members may want to make different choices. We can provide a hair clipping as a memento. Your pet's remains will then be respectfully prepared for communal cremation unless you have made alternative arrangements for aftercare.

This guide on [Coping with the Loss of a Pet](#) can help your family grieve and heal from the loss .

