



Arrangements after euthanasia

You may wish to take your pet home with you to bury. Alternatively we can arrange to have them cremated by the pet cremation service used by the practice. They also offer an individual cremation service for your pet so you can have your pets' ashes returned to you – please feel free to discuss your requirements at any time with practice staff.

Below is an organisation available to help you through this sad time:

Blue Cross: www.bluecross.org.uk



Summary

Saying goodbye to a much loved pet, whether they are old and at the end of a long and happy life, or young and haven't had the years you had hoped for, is probably the most emotionally difficult decision you will face as a pet owner.

We believe that the ability to save our pets from unnecessary suffering at the end of their life is the final reward we can bestow on them for their unquestioning loyalty and devotion to us. It will always be a time tinged with sadness but knowing we have given them a dignified and peaceful end will help that sadness to pass quicker and the happy memories to return sooner.



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.



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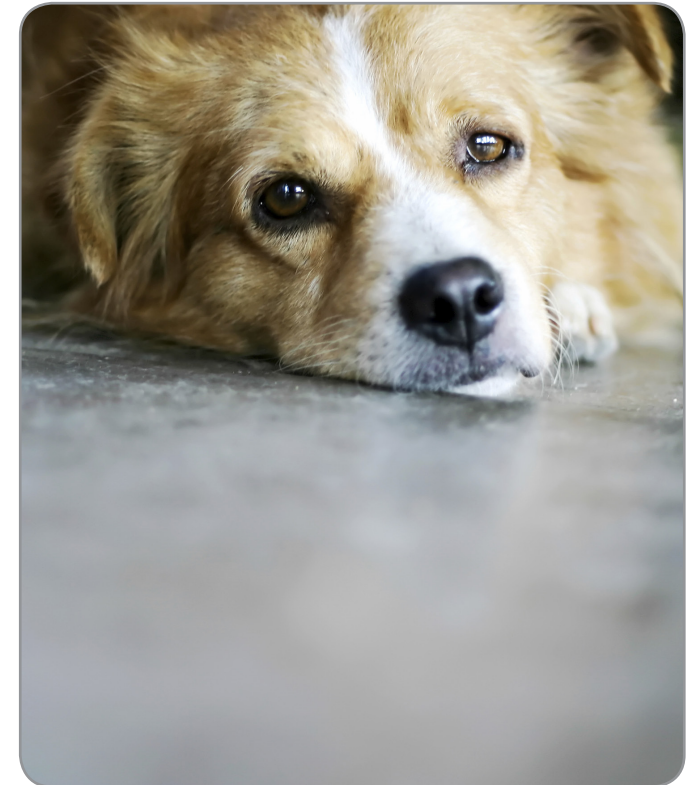
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EUTHANASIA



Euthanasia is one of the most difficult times we face as pet owners. Knowing how to make it at the "right" time troubles many owners and this leaflet aims to help that decision-making for you.

How do I know the time is right?

There are several factors you might consider when assessing your pet's quality of life, in no particular order:

- Appetite and thirst – are they eating and drinking enough to maintain their strength and body condition?
- Restfulness – are they able to rest or sleep comfortably and contentedly for sufficient lengths of time?
- Dignity – are they able to maintain their own personal hygiene and toileting requirements?
- Pain – are they free from persistent pain?
- Mobility – can they move themselves around without assistance from you and in such a way to maintain the points above?

You may find that not all these parameters apply to your pet but there is much overlap between them and it often becomes apparent when considering each, that other aspects of their life are being affected too. Our decision to finally put our pet to sleep should always be made with their welfare at the forefront of that decision.

We will often see the silver lining in a dark situation as a reason to delay our own heartache but if we approach the decision through our pet's existence, it is much easier to make the correct decision for our pet.

And of course your vet is always available to guide you where you may feel uncertain about symptoms you may be seeing in your pet.



On the Day

Once you have decided that the time has come to ask for euthanasia of your pet, an appointment can be made by ringing your usual surgery. If you would prefer us to make a home visit, booking the appointment as far in advance as is reasonably possible will allow us to accommodate your request with the least amount of delay to you and your pet. (Please discuss this option further with your vet if you have any other questions regarding our availability for home visits.)

You may also prefer that we carry out the euthanasia of your pet in your car. Whilst we will endeavour to fulfil your request, it may not always be practical for space or access reasons but we are happy to assess this on the day.

In order to carry out euthanasia, we need to have access to a vein of sufficient size to allow us to inject the medicine we use, quickly and painlessly. In most cases we will use a vein on the front leg but may decide to use a different vein if we aren't happy with the access these provide. Your vet may also decide to improve the access by placing a catheter in the vein they want to use.



Occasionally we may use a sedative to calm an anxious patient – if we feel this is appropriate we will discuss this with you at the time. However in the majority of cases, this is not required and with gentle handling and reassurance we are able to inject your pet with the minimum of stress to them.

Usually present during the euthanasia will be your vet, their assistant to gently hold your pet and raise a vein, and yourself. However you may prefer to leave your pet with us and not be present during the procedure. This is entirely your choice and we make no insistence either way.

Once the medicine has been injected, your pet will drift away quickly and your vet will confirm when they have passed away. Some animals may have slight muscle tremors or even take what appear to be gasps after they have passed. Many will also let go of their bowels and bladder.