



PET HOSPICE, QUALITY OF LIFE
& PEACEFUL PASSING

Den Herder 
Veterinary Hospital



Our Mission

Our mission in end of life and hospice care is that the passing of the pets in our care happens in the most humane way possible, so that both the pets that are passing, and the families that love them, experience a euthanasia or pet death, that is as stress and pain-free as possible.



WHAT IS *Hospice Care*

Hospice care is the continuance of medical care with the understanding that a 'cure' or 'resolve' of the medical issue will not occur, and that the goal of treatment is therefore changed to keeping the pet as comfortable as we can.

Although we want your pet to have as much time with you as possible, we want that time *quality* time. Therefore our goals are:



01

Comfort and Pain Management

Our primary goal is quality over quantity: ensuring that your pet is living their best quality of life possible. This may look like adjusting or adding in medications, medical procedures such as routine subcutaneous fluids, or helping to ensure that you have the right set up at home.

02

Counseling and Decision Making

We will work as a team to ensure that we know that your pet is either able to pass peacefully on their own, or to ensure that we have control over when we decide it may be time to help them pass.

QUALITY OF LIFE

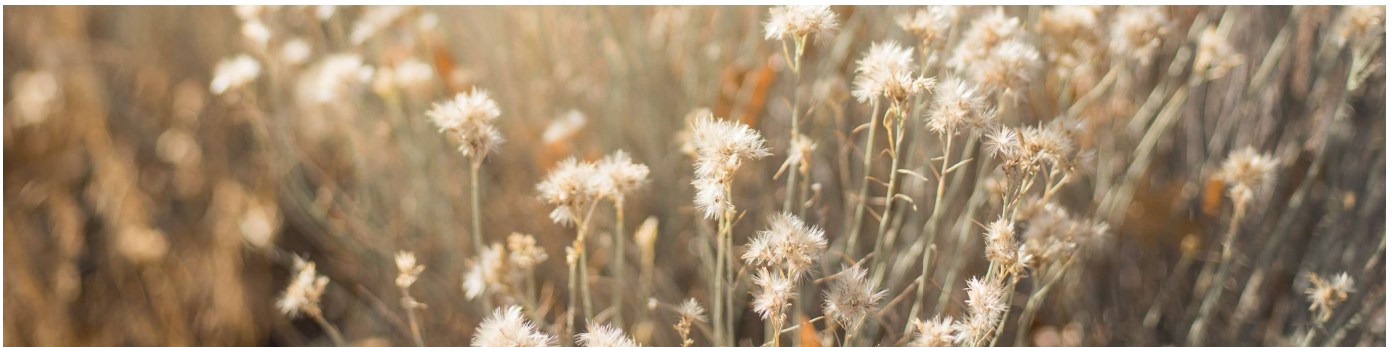
Common Questions

*"Grief never ends,
but it changes.
It's a passage, not
a place to stay.
Grief is not a sign
of weakness nor a
lack of faith, it is
the price of love."
-K.C Wells*

How will I know when it's time?

In the past you may have heard that "you'll know when it's time." Unfortunately, this is not always the case with our beloved animals. In many circumstances, in order to prevent pain and suffering, choosing the time to help your pet pass on may be a decision that is made in advance. Thankfully, this decision is not one that you need to make on your own - and is something that we will help guide you through in order to find the best time for both you, and your cherished family member.

Regardless of your pets' medical history or past, our goals are the same: to relieve suffering and pain, and to provide the most peaceful passing as possible. Helping you to assess your pets quality of life, and their future quality of life, will help us to make that decision.



QUALITY OF LIFE

Common Questions



*"Grief is the
price we pay for
love."*

-K.C. Wells

How do I assess quality of life?

Have you ever been told that your pet's last day should only be if they've stopped eating? In some cases, this may be the case, but for others, determining quality of life may not be as simple. A pet's quality of life can be difficult to measure - especially if they have an ailment that does not cause complete body dysfunction. We will help you to ensure that your pet is not suffering or painful, and provide you with resources to reduce and relieve that pain if possible.

For better assessment of their overall wellness, we have provided in this packet some common quality of life scales that can help us to be able to make the best decision for your pet, and your family. These scales are from Lap of Love - a wonderful resource for families and veterinarians regarding end of life care and decisions for small animals.

Lap of Love 

Veterinary Hospice & In-Home Euthanasia

END OF LIFE

Common Questions



"It came to me that every time I lose a dog they take a piece of my heart with them. Yet every new dog who comes into my life gifts me with a piece of their heart. If I live long enough, all the components of my heart will be dog and I will become as generous and loving as they are." -

Unknown

Is euthanasia painful?

Thankfully, no: The term 'euthanasia' literally means 'to bring a good death' - and that is our goal in the process of euthanasia: to help our loved ones pass on in a dignified manner, free of pain and discomfort. Our process is set up to ensure that any risk of pain or discomfort is minimized.

What will euthanasia look like?

During euthanasia, we will ask to borrow your pet to place an intravenous catheter that way we only need to poke your loved one once, and they can be in any position during the final medication. We will then administer a pain medication that will also allow them to get sleepy and relax. Finally, our veterinarian will administer the final solution through the IV catheter. The passing of the solution is usually painless, and feels like an 'overdose of anesthesia'. Typically pets will take a few deep breaths as they relax, but otherwise it will seem as if they are just drifting off to sleep.

END OF LIFE

Common Questions



Will my other pet know?

Other pets in your household may already be picking up on pheromones or subtle cues that your beloved member may be approaching the end of their time. However, pets experience grief very similarly as we do. You may notice that other pets in the home may be more withdrawn, slow, or down just before, or following the loss of your loved one.

Can my other pet be present as we say goodbye?

Some families choose for other pets to be present during the euthanasia process. Other families choose to bring home a blanket or toy that was with their family member as they passed, so that they may pick up the pheromones indicating to them that they have passed.



During mourning, your pet may need extra affection, attention or activities. Try your best to stick to your typical schedule, but consider adding in extra time dedicated to them whether that be extra play time, walks, or snuggles on the couch. Your dog/cat may also become a bit more dependent on you - ensure that they have entertainment while you are gone. If your pet is truly struggling - do not hesitate to reach out as we may be able to help as well in the form of tips/tricks or medication.

END OF LIFE

Common Questions



What if I can't be there?

I'm bringing my pet to the clinic, but I don't want to be present.

- We completely understand, and there is no judgement. Just let us know what parts you would like to be present for, and we can accommodate this for

you. Some people wish to be 'around' but not be present for the final injection, and choose to step into our garden and be alerted when the process is over. Others wish to have their pet sedated, and leave when they are calm. And some individuals do not want to be present at all. We believe that there is no 'right way' to say goodbye so long as the pet is comfortable, and will help you to ensure that the process is peaceful and as stress free as possible for both your pet AND you.

I'm bringing my dog to the clinic, but someone who wants to be there cannot.

- This is a difficult situation, and in some cases we need to say goodbye, even if there are family members who aren't here. We try to accommodate as best as we can. If your doctor approves, Facetiming can be a good option in this tough circumstance.

I want an at-home euthanasia, but can't stand to be there for the final injection.

- We are happy to accommodate however we can in this situation as well. Let us know what your wishes are, and we will walk you through every step, and decide how present you would like to be.

What if my pet passes at home?

Should your pet pass away at home, you are always welcome to bring them to us for confirmation of death. At that time, we could also help with aftercare in the form of cremation, or making a clay pawprint. Other families may choose to keep their pet home for burial. Should your pet pass away at home, please notify us so that we are aware. ♥

END OF LIFE

At Home Euthanasia

We offer at-home euthanasia as a service, however, due to staffing it may not be available for every pet or situation. If you are interested in at-home euthanasia, please call and talk with a nurse or Dr. Alicen Tracey to decide if this is right for you, your pet, and your pet's condition. In most cases, at-home euthanasias are reserved for cases that:

1. Involve a chronic, or known illness in which case the euthanasia is planned in advance.
2. The pet is stable, and not in an emergency situation
3. Have been scheduled enough in advance that a doctor and nurse are able to come to your home during business hours.
4. Is performed at a home that is within our drivable range.

If you have any questions about whether or not at-home euthanasia is an option for your pet, please give us a call. We are happy to accommodate when we can, as at-home euthanasias can be a peaceful, beautiful way to say goodbye to a pet. However, in order to provide the proper level of care for this service, requires a lot of planning.

There is an additional fee associated with this service:

	At Home Euthanasia and At Home Burial	At Home Euthanasia and Communal Cremation	At Home Euthanasia and Private Cremation
Less than 2 lbs	412	506	600
3 - 50 lbs	412	565	672
51 - 100 lbs	412	594	707
100 - 150 lbs	412	597	844
150 -199 lbs	412	597	875

If love could have saved you, you would live forever.



REMEMBERING YOUR PET

What happens afterwards?

We offer the following for aftercare options:

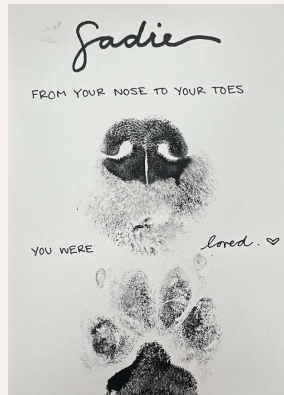
1) Private Cremation:

We work closely with Trusted Journey, a pet after-care service, that comes specially to our office for pick up of beloved pets for private cremation, with ashes returned.

- *Private cremation, at our clinic, includes an ink nose and paw print, a small section of hair within a memorial jar, a clay paw print, and ashes within an urn of your choosing. There are five urns that are included free-of-charge within our private cremation package. However, you are able to visit the Trusted Journey website to look at other urn options (additional fees may apply).*

INCLUDED FOR ALL PRIVATE CREMATIONS:

- Nose/paw print
- Clay paw print
- Hair memorial in memorial jar



INCLUDED URN OPTIONS:

- Blue scattering tube
- Cedar Wooden Urn with Name Plaque
- Carved Wooden Urn with Name Plaque
- Tan Metal Urn*
- Navy Metal Urn*

**Metal urns are not engravable from this company directly, but can be taken to other facilities (such as a trophy shop) for engravement*



REMEMBERING YOUR PET

What happens afterwards?

We offer the following for aftercare options:

2) Communal Cremation:

For those that do not want ashes returned, Trusted Journey has a dedicated pet cemetery where your pet and other's cremains are spread.

3) Home Burial:

Finally, pets are certainly welcome to be buried at home, if you so choose. We can offer a special burial box, if you'd like, to help you with this process.

- The following QR code will direct you to Lap of Love's Website regarding helpful tips related to home burials to ensure that your pet is laid to rest in the best possible.
- Please remember to follow local rules/ordinances regarding burial.



What can I do to memorialize my pet?

Here are some ideas of ways to remember and honor your pet (See additional QR codes on resource page):

- Trusted Journey has many options of additional memorial items for purchase. Visit the QR code to look at some of their many options including:

- Custom jewelry and ash keepsake jewelry
- Custom art/other memorial pieces

Please only use the QR to the side for general viewing purposes. An email will be sent to you to order any specific items you may wish from

Trusted Journey.



- Commission a painting or drawing of them
- Create a 'memorial' section on your mantle or wall of photos
- Light a memorial candle when you think of them, or at special times
 - See QR code to a recommendation from Dr. Alicen (not sponsored)
- Plant a memorial tree or flower in honor of your pet
- Make a donation to a local rescue in your pet's name
- Have 'rainbow bridge' photos taken of you and your pet prior to their passing.
 - 'The Tilly Project' is a resource that has end-of-life pet photographers for different areas listed, as well as grief resources.
 - There are numerous local photographers that provide this service as well (see last page)

REMEMBERING YOUR PET

What happens afterwards?

Transparency in aftercare pricing

No one revels in talking about pricing when it comes time to saying goodbye to a pet. However, we know that it can be an important aspect in making final decisions. If you have any questions about our pricing, our would like a full itemized estimate, please be sure to let us know. We don't want any surprises, and want to ensure that this process is as smooth as possible for you and your beloved pet.

General Practice Pricing



GENERAL PRACTICE	Euthanasia and At Home Burial	Euthanasia and Communal Cremation	Euthanasia and Private Cremation
Less than 2 lbs	130	224	315
3 - 50 lbs	130	283	390
51 - 100 lbs	130	312	425
100 - 150 lbs	130	315	562
150 - 199 lbs	130	315	593

Urgent Care Pricing

5PM - 8PM Weekdays

10 AM - 4 PM Saturday



URGENT CARE	Euthanasia and At Home Burial	Euthanasia and Communal Cremation	Euthanasia and Private Cremation
Less than 2 lbs	262	356	450
3 - 50 lbs	262	415	522
51 - 100 lbs	262	444	557
100 - 150 lbs	262	447	694
150 - 199 lbs	262	447	725

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO

Say Goodbye

OUR Timeline

1 ●

CALL OUR OFFICE & SET UP A TIME

We will help to ensure that we have a team dedicated to helping you say goodbye whenever you decide that it is time.

2 ●

ENSURING AFTER CARE DECISIONS

We will ask you a series of questions, and have you sign a document to ensure that we understand your wishes for your pet.

Following the peaceful passing of your pet, our aftercare options are:

- Bringing home for home burial
- Private cremation with ashes returned or
- Communal cremation, where ashes are spread in our local cemetery with other pets.

3 ●

THE DAY OF

Upon your arrival, we will escort you to a private room and may ask that we borrow your pet in order to place an intravenous catheter. This helps us to ensure that your pet is poked as few times as possible, and provides a port so that your pet may be in whatever position they like during the final procedure. Once that is in place, we will offer your pet sedation so that they are as comfortable as possible as they spend their final moments with you. You may take as much time as you'd like, so long as your pet is comfortable. When it is time, we will instruct you on how to alert your doctor.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO

Say Goodbye

4

WHEN IT'S TIME

We will help to ensure that you have a way to notify the doctor when it is time to finally say goodbye. The doctor will come with two fluid filled syringes: a clear fluid to ensure that your pet's catheter port is open and pain-free, and a pink solution - the final, solution. The final solution will be passed slowly through your pet's veins, and is essentially an 'overdose of anesthesia'. As your pet passes away, you may notice that they take some deep breaths as they relax, they may relax their bowels, and they will likely not close their eyes. The procedure is otherwise a painless process that allows your pet to pass to the other side peacefully.

5

SAYING GOODBYE

After your pet has passed, you are welcome to spend as much time as you'd like with them. When you are ready, you will alert our team members of your leaving so that we can ensure that we are with your pet to move them on to the next step of their after-care. We have a lovely garden that you are welcome to exit out of, as you say goodbye. ♥

6

AFTER CARE

Following euthanasia your pet will continue to be treated with the upmost respect and care as we prepare them to be buried at home with you, or as they are prepared to their trip with Trusted Journey, our partnered crematorium. Should you select that ashes be returned, we will call you as soon as they are available.



GRIEF, QUALITY OF LIFE & END OF LIFE

Resources

You are not alone.

We are here to help you as you
make decisions for your pet.
Please do not hesitate to contact
us.

Lap of Love: General Resources

This website is a great resource for many geriatric pet ailments, quality of life assessment and grief.



Lap of Love: Home Burials

Lap of Love's resource for home burial tips and recommendations.



Its Never Long Enough: A practical Guide for Caring for Your Geriatric Dog

A book by Dr. Mary Gardner, an expert in hospice, and geriatric care for pets.



Nine Lives are Not Enough: A practical Guide for Caring for Your Geriatric Cat

A book by Dr. Mary Gardner, an expert in hospice, and geriatric care for pets.



Nelli's Designs: Memorial Candle

Dr. Alicen's favorite memorial candle company.



The Tilly Project

Organization focusing on providing grief resources, as well as a resource for end-of-life photographers.



Dog Heaven

A children's picture book that helps children, as well as adults, process the grief of losing a beloved dog.



Cat Heaven

A children's picture book that helps children, as well as adults, process the grief of losing a beloved cat.



Trusted Journey

Our partner for aftercare. Additional memorial items, etc. can be found here.



Pet Parent Grief Support

Additional resources for grief including articles on supporting children and the elderly with the loss of a pet, as well as nurturing surviving pets through a loss.



Pet Parent Grief Line:
1-844-472-9588



Written by Dr. Alicen Tracey; last updated 9.22.25