

The Euthanasia Procedure

After a consultation with a veterinarian and thorough discussion of the special circumstances surrounding your pet's illness, you have reached the decision to euthanize your pet. We appreciate the enormity of this decision, and how important your pet is to you and your family, and we endeavour to ensure a peaceful and pain-free release from suffering.

You and your pet will be shown to our Comfort Room, a quieter room in the centre of the hospital. In some circumstances, this room may not be available, but we will try to provide it whenever possible.

Once in the Comfort Room, the veterinarian will require you to sign forms to authorize the euthanasia, and will also discuss aftercare options for your pet's body. Billing may also be completed at this point in time, so that we may truly focus on your beloved pet in their final moments.

A veterinary technician will place an intravenous catheter into one of your pet's legs. This procedure may be performed in our treatment area, or in the Comfort Room should you prefer. Most pets will tolerate this very readily – there is only the slightest needle poke that accompanies the catheter placement. The catheter allows us easy access, to ensure that the anaesthetic agent stays within the vein, and reaches the bloodstream quickly.

There will be a bandage placed around the catheter and a clear tube attached to the catheter, known as an extension set. This set allows you as the family members to get as close to your pet as possible, with the veterinarian at a bit of a distance.

Your pet will likely be wrapped in blankets or on a large blanket on the floor, so that you may hold or cuddle them as you feel comfortable to do. For pets held in the lap, an incontinence pad is directly underneath them, to absorb any urine or stool that may be released.

A sedative injection may be administered, to make the process as quiet and peaceful as possible. Once this injection has been given, the anaesthetic overdose injection is administered. A saline flush will likely follow the anaesthetic injection, to ensure that your pet receives the full dose.

After the sedative injection, your pet will be only slightly responsive, and look very much like they are asleep. During the injection of the anaesthetic, your pet will relax completely, very quickly. You will notice that they stop breathing, and may even have a bowel movement or urinate, and that their eyes remain open. In both humans and animals, anaesthetics cause the loss of the ability to blink, and that is why for anaesthesia in people, the eyes are taped closed.

After the saline flush, your veterinarian will listen for a heartbeat, using a stethoscope. They may also check for a pulse inside the back leg, and gently touch the surface of the eye. After this has been checked, they will tell you that your pet has peacefully died.

After the euthanasia, your pet's body is handled with loving care, according to the wishes that you decided on before the euthanasia. Please keep in mind that burial of pets is not permitted within the city limits.

If you have decided on cremation with the ashes returned to you, we will contact you as soon as your pet's ashes return to the hospital, typically within 7-10 business days.