



Client-Present Euthanasia Protocol

A Helpful Checklist for Veterinary Teams

Laurel Lagoni, M.S.

During your pre-euthanasia consultation with clients, ensure that you:

- discuss euthanasia as specifically as possible and identify your client's wishes.
- explain the medical aspects of the procedure and answer client questions.
- explain the emotional aspects of the procedure and educate clients about local/national resources that offer grief support.
- provide clients with written information about euthanasia and the grief process.
- determine which family members, as well as staff members will be present.
- determine where (clinic Comfort Room, outdoor area, client's home) the euthanasia will take place.
- discuss body care options and help clients choose their preferred method.
- if possible, explain/complete any necessary paperwork and arrange for payment.
- set an appointment date and time.
- remind clients to bring special toys, blankets, music they want to use during the euthanasia.
- get specific directions if euthanasia is to be performed at the client's home or away from the hospital.

At the time of the euthanasia appointment, ensure that you:

- prepare the euthanasia site, ensuring that tissues, floor mats, memorials, etc. are in place.
- inform other staff members about the client's arrival and ensure staff is prepared.
- complete paperwork and payment arrangements if not already done.
- confirm body care decisions.
- if using a catheter, remind the client about the benefits of the procedure and remove the pet for placement.
- offer client time alone with pet.
- before proceeding with each injection(s), state out loud what you are injecting and remind client about how the pet is likely to react.
- if using a catheter, inject saline solution to ensure it is patent.
- if using a sedative, inject it to calm the patient.
- inject the euthanasia solution.
- use a stethoscope to listen for the pet's heart to stop beating and gently and quietly pronounce the pet dead.



(Cont.)

After euthanasia, ensure that you:

- ___ offer client additional time alone with the pet.
- ___ assist clients with making/collecting memorials or linking objects, like clippings of fur or clay paw prints.
- ___ ask a member of your veterinary team to stay with the pet as clients exit. (This is the last image clients have of their pets and most don't like remembering them as being alone.)
- ___ guide clients to a side or back exit so they can leave without going through the clinic's waiting room
- ___ escort clients to their vehicle and say good-bye. Be sure client is able to drive safely.
- ___ follow-up with a condolence card and/or telephone check-in call to client within 48 hours of the euthanasia.

If euthanasia is performed at client's home, follow the same protocols as listed above. In addition, ensure that you:

- ___ arrive a bit early to set up the area where the euthanasia will be performed.
- ___ familiarize yourself with the location so you are prepared to meet any unforeseen circumstances.
- ___ travel with extra quantities of all supplies that will be needed:
 - saline solution
 - sedative
 - euthanasia solution
 - syringes and catheters
 - clippers
 - sturdy board, stretcher or body bags to transport the pet's body (make sure they will fit through doorways)
 - large waterproof tarp or plastic to place under the pet
 - blankets or large towels/fleeces to place over the plastic layer
 - resource materials about grief and loss
 - tissues
 - scissors and envelopes for fur clippings
 - kits for making clay paw prints

While in-home euthanasia is often more challenging for the veterinary team, the service is greatly appreciated by most clients.

For more information, visit the Veterinary Wisdom[®] Resource Center at www.veterinarywisdom.com