



## Checklist: Talking to Your Clients about Euthanasia

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The initial conversation about your patient's euthanasia is never an easy one, especially if the pet still has several months to live. Since your client may be reluctant to bring up the topic of euthanasia, it's usually your responsibility to begin "the talk." Use the following checklist to help you remember all of the topics that need to be discussed:

- Pet Hospice Care**  
If your veterinary team offers a pet hospice program to keep your patients comfortable during their last weeks and days, ask clients about their interest in your service.
- Medical Details**  
Since every veterinarian performs euthanasia in a slightly different way, don't assume that your clients know what to expect from the process. Describe how the medical procedures surrounding euthanasia are conducted in your practice. For instance, you may use a sedative to relax your patient prior to administering the euthanasia drug, as well as place a catheter so you can easily deliver the euthanasia drug. Informing clients about such details helps them better understand what to expect from the experience.
- Emotional Support**  
Pet parents and veterinarians often have different visions about the best ways to say good-bye. It's helpful to paint a picture for your clients about how you handle the emotional (e.g. families and/or children who wish to be present, music, blessings, etc.) aspects of euthanasia. Ask clients about the details that are most important to them about saying good-bye so their desires and your capabilities match.
- Location**  
Inform clients about where and when their pet's euthanasia can take place and when you can be available to them. If your clinic has a private Comfort Room or outdoor garden area for performing euthanasia, provide your client with a brief tour. Also, let clients know if you can provide in-home euthanasia for their pet, along with the times of day you prefer to make euthanasia appointments.
- Body Care**  
Accurate information about all of the body care options (e.g. cremation, home burial, burial at a pet cemetery, animal rendering services) that are available to your clients helps them feel comfortable making the right choice for their pets. Tell clients who performs each service and how much each will cost.
- Cost of Euthanasia**  
If your veterinary clinic offers a range of options for euthanasia (e.g. a simple medical procedure without clients in attendance; in-clinic euthanasia with clients present and more ceremonial aspects; in-home services with body removal,) be clear about the charges for each of the options.
- Keepsakes, Resources and Support Services**  
Tell clients about local pet loss support groups or mental health professionals and provide them with handouts to help them understand grief. Make clay prints of a patient's paw and clip a lock of their pet's fur as "links" to the happy, loving memories they shared.

For more information, visit the Veterinary Wisdom® Resource Center at [www.veterinarywisdom.com](http://www.veterinarywisdom.com)