



In Home Pet Euthanasia: What Should I Expect?

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In-home pet euthanasia is a growing sector with more and more pet parents opting for the service every day. The concept may feel intuitive and yet foreign. Perhaps you haven't had to face the decision to euthanize a pet before, or maybe you have said goodbye to several beloved pets but always in the vet's office. You may be asking: "How does in-home pet euthanasia work? What should I expect?" Here we will explore 7 things you can expect from in-home pet euthanasia.

Expect a veterinarian

Under certain circumstances, euthanasia may be performed by persons other than a licensed veterinarian. Such instances may include shelter settings, laboratories, or situations in which a veterinarian is supervising the procedure. However, in-home euthanasia is currently only performed by veterinarians licensed in the state where the service is provided.

Expect the same level of care

The technical aspects of euthanasia are the same whether performed in a veterinary hospital or your home. The veterinarian will acquaint themselves with your pet, gathering any pertinent medical history and assessing the pet's current physical status. Depending on your pet's condition, species, size, and history the veterinarian will administer the appropriate pre-medications. These are given prior to the euthanasia solution and often include a combination of sedatives, anesthetics, and drugs to combat anxiety and pain. Feel free to ask your veterinarian the way the medication (s) will be administered, how long until it will take effect, and any other questions you may have. Your veterinarian will monitor the effects of the medications and will not proceed to the final step until you and your pet are ready.



Expect a "good death"

Euthanasia stems from the Greek words eu meaning "good" or "easy" and thanatos meaning "death." To bring about this "good death," or euthanasia, veterinarians use a barbiturate; this class of drugs have been used as surgical anesthetics in human and veterinary medicine. When used for pet euthanasia, a large dose is given to quickly and completely depress the brain's activity and cause a death free from pain and stress. In some instances, a pet's body may display involuntary movements such as twitching or agonal breaths. It is important to note that when these occur, it is after a complete loss of consciousness. These signs are merely energy moving through the body, not a conscious effort to move or "fight" the process. Throughout the euthanasia process, your veterinarian will continue to monitor your pet until they have confirmed that the pet has

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Expect the ability to set the mood

The beginning of the appointment will require some paperwork such as the signing a consent form and payment, if it hasn't already been handled. However after the formalities, you are free to set the tone and ambiance. Some families enjoy telling stories and sharing memories while others prefer to process more quietly and somberly. You may wish to include other pets or invite close friends to say their goodbyes. You are welcome to play music, light candles, and honor your pet with poems, prayers, or rituals that are meaningful to you.

Expect less anxiety

While losing a pet is never easy, the process can be made less stressful. When your pet is euthanized at home, they are able to remain where they are most comfortable. Many pets are anxious when being transported and several pets may be fearful of the veterinary office. However, because the at-home euthanasia veterinarian is welcomed as any other guest, pets usually settle back down after the excitement of the new-comer has subsided. If your pet is territorial or hides from strangers, speak to your veterinarian in advance to discuss the best approach.

In-home pet euthanasia is also less stressful for pet parents. Having the veterinarian come to you provides privacy as it removes the need to interact with office staff and other pet parents. In addition to preventing the empty-handed trip back home. Finally, there is no need to “keep it together” or “put on a brave face.” In the comfort of your own home, you can grieve authentically and begin the healing process.

Expect your wishes to be carried out

In-home euthanasia veterinarians usually have a professional relationship with a local crematorium or aqua-cremation service provider, so that they can facilitate the respectful transfer of deceased pets to the facility that will prepare them for their final rest. Each facility will have their own options regarding return of remains, urns, and keepsakes. Speak with your veterinarian in advance to learn what options are available in your area and what best suits your needs.

If you wish to bury your pet privately, your veterinarian will leave the pet in your care. Be sure to review all local laws and regulations as well as best practices for private burial. As unpleasant as it is, it's important to note that other pets or wildlife may be attracted to gravesites and die if they ingest euthanized remains. This may come with hefty fines if the wildlife happens to be protected.

Expect to grieve

At the end of the day, saying goodbye to a beloved pet is hard. Regardless of how prepared you are and where it is done, euthanizing a pet is a significant loss. Allow yourself time and space to move through the grieving process. Reach out for support whether that be from family, friends, other pet parents walking this road, or professional grief counselors. Consider ways you can maintain a connection to your pet after they have passed, such as clay paw prints, locks of fur, or memorial markers. Above all, be kind to yourself. To give the gift of euthanasia is the one time that we have to dig deeper and love our pet just a little more than they love us.

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