

Pet Euthanasia Decision and Aftercare Workbook

A guide for veterinary conversations, choices, goodbye, and grief

Pet's name _____ Species _____ Date _____

Veterinary clinic _____ Phone _____

This workbook helps you gather observations, questions, values, and practical preferences. It cannot determine when euthanasia is appropriate and does not replace an examination or advice from your veterinarian. If your pet has sudden breathing difficulty, severe pain, collapse, or another urgent change, contact a veterinary team promptly.

Use only the pages that help. A conversation with your veterinarian can clarify prognosis, comfort-care options, and the likely benefits and burdens of waiting or treating.



My pet's story

Begin with who your pet is beyond the diagnosis.

My pet's personality and favorite routines

What brings comfort

What seems stressful or frightening

What makes my pet seem most like themselves



What I have noticed

Bring dates, examples, and changes to the veterinary conversation. Leave anything uncertain blank.

Area	What I notice	Since when or how often
Comfort or pain		
Breathing		
Eating or drinking		
Movement and balance		
Rest and sleep		
Interest in people or activities		
Other		

Current diagnosis, treatment, and medications



Quality of life reflection

This is a conversation aid. A number cannot make the decision. Record what is usual for your pet and what has changed.

Area	Today 0–3	Examples or notes
Comfort		
Eating and drinking		
Mobility		
Rest		
Engagement		
Good days and difficult days		

0 = severe concern; 1 = often difficult; 2 = sometimes difficult; 3 = generally comfortable. Discuss interpretation with your veterinarian.

What my pet still enjoys

What is hardest for my pet



Questions for the veterinarian

Mark the questions you want answered and use the blank space for notes.

- ☐ What is the diagnosis and likely course?
- ☐ How can I recognize pain, distress, or an emergency?
- ☐ What treatment or comfort-care options remain, and what are their burdens?
- ☐ Would a short treatment trial be reasonable? What outcomes would show that it helps?
- ☐ Is euthanasia medically appropriate now? Is there a reason not to wait?
- ☐ What should I expect before, during, and after the procedure?

Answers and follow-up questions



What matters most

There may be no moment of complete certainty. Naming your priorities can make the conversation clearer.

What I hope for my pet

My greatest concern about waiting

My greatest concern about euthanasia

My ability to provide care at home and the support I would need



Options to discuss

Use this worksheet after the veterinary conversation. Write the likely benefits and burdens for your pet and family.

Option	Potential benefit	Potential burden or question
Continue current care		
Time-limited treatment or comfort care		
Plan humane euthanasia		

A decision point or change that would make me call the veterinarian again



Appointment and goodbye plan

Ask the clinic which choices are available and medically suitable for your pet.

Preferred location and who I would like present

Comfort items or words I want nearby

Keepsakes I would like to request

Who can drive, sit with me, or help afterward

Questions to ask: May I remain with my pet? What sedation or comfort measures are used? How long should I allow? What aftercare choices and costs are available?



Talking with children

Use direct, age-appropriate words and allow questions. Ask the veterinary team for help explaining what will happen.

A possible explanation: “Our pet’s body is very sick and cannot get better. The veterinarian will give medicine so their body stops working and they die. They will not wake up. We can remember them and talk about how we feel.” Tailor the explanation to the actual situation with a trusted adult.

What the child knows and asks

A trusted adult available afterward

How the child may choose to participate or say goodbye



The first days afterward

Sadness, numbness, relief, guilt, anger, and changes in routine may coexist. Make a small plan for care and company.

Need	My plan or helper
Food and water	
Rest	
Someone to contact	
A task to postpone or share	
Comfort or quiet	



Aftercare and memorial choices

Ask what your clinic and local services offer. You may need time to decide.

Options offered for remains and costs

My current preference or question

Keepsakes I would like

A memory or ritual I want to preserve



Working with guilt and what if thoughts

A difficult decision can be compassionate and still painful. Try recording what you knew at the time and what was outside your control.

Thought that returns	What I knew or did from care	What I could not control

A compassionate statement I can practice



When to reach out

Pet grief deserves support. A counselor, pet-loss group, trusted person, or primary care clinician may help if sleep, eating, relationships, or daily life are persistently difficult.

If you have thoughts of self-harm or suicide or cannot stay safe, call or text 988 in the United States. For immediate danger, call 911 or go to an emergency department. Outside the United States, use local crisis and emergency services.



30 day aftercare journal

These prompts from the source workbook are optional. Write a few words, draw, or return to them later.

Day 1

What did you love most about your pet?

Day 2

Describe your pet's personality, habits, and quirks.



Day 3

What memory brings comfort today?

Day 4

What part of the decision feels hardest right now?



Day 5

What did you do to care for your pet during their life?

Day 6

What signs showed that your pet trusted you?



Day 7

Write a letter to your pet beginning with: "Thank you for..."

Day 8

What does relief mean to you, if you are feeling it?



Day 9

What guilt or “what if” thought keeps returning?

Day 10

What would you say to a friend who made the same loving decision?



Day 11

What is missing from your daily routine?

Day 12

What is one gentle way to care for yourself today?



Day 13

Write about a favorite ordinary moment with your pet.

Day 14

What did your pet teach you about love, care, patience, or joy?



Day 15

What object, place, sound, or activity reminds you of your pet?

Day 16

What is one thing you wish you could tell your pet?



Day 17

What does your home feel like now?

Day 18

Who can listen without trying to rush or minimize your grief?



Day 19

What support do you need this week?

Day 20

What memory of your pet makes you smile?



Day 21

What would a meaningful memorial look like?

Day 22

What did you do well as your pet's caregiver?



Day 23

What was outside your control?

Day 24

What does your pet's life mean to you?



Day 25

How can you honor your pet while allowing yourself to rest?

Day 26

What are you learning about grief?



Day 27

What do you want to remember about the final chapter of your pet's life?

Day 28

What kind of support might help on difficult dates or anniversaries?



Day 29

What has helped, even slightly, since your pet died?

Day 30

Complete these sentences: "My pet knew love through _____." "I
made decisions from a place of _____."



Closing reflection

Your pet's life and your care mattered.

A memory I want to keep

What helped, even slightly

What support I need now

A message I want to offer myself

Further reading: American Veterinary Medical Association, "Pet Euthanasia" client brochure (2025).

