

Euthanasia
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE
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EUTHANASIA

All animals are entitled to dignity and to comfort. There are times when, in order to preserve these life qualities, it may be necessary to 'help an old friend on his way'. In most cases, when an animal has received a [natural diet](#) and [homeopathic medication](#) for illness and has not been [over-vaccinated](#), he will find his own way out in a dignified and controlled manner, at a time and place of his own choosing. It seems that [holistic care](#) through life can increase the chances of a natural end. This happily removes the responsibility of decision from us and would appear to be infinitely the preferred route out of this life.

If however, for some reason, this proves impossible for him and quality of life is becoming a burden, there are homeopathic medications which can help him to make up his mind. Giving these does not constitute euthanasia but helps resolve the agonies of indecision that seem to beset some unfortunate animals, in their last hours, days or weeks. Giving the medication can help them either to decide to stay, picking up in health and energy or to decide to leave, in which case a peaceful passing often seems possible.

Decisions on euthanasia are very difficult. There may not be a correct answer. Clearly one does not wish to rob an animal of his life, if it is wrong to do so. Judgement on the correct time is very complex and very individual. In general, if an animal is suffering significant loss of quality of life and dignity, such that life holds no attractions, and if there is no hope for recovery and if he cannot find his own way out calmly and with dignity, then intervention becomes necessary. Signs of this state are loss of interest in surroundings and lack of reactivity. If an animal is actively engaging in his or her environment and taking an active interest in what is going on, it is probably too soon to consider euthanasia.

When a decision is made, veterinary surgeons will often make a house-call, if possible, to allow a pet to die in his own home, among friends. Sedatives may be given beforehand, if it seems appropriate to do so. A lethal injection may then be given, usually into the bloodstream, via a vein.

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When an old friend has passed away, there is the practical question of what to do with the body. Burial at home is chosen by many. Cremation appears to be the other best option. This can be arranged through your veterinary surgeon.

In all cases, where euthanasia is being considered, you are likely to find your veterinary surgeon sympathetic and willing to talk through the situation, to help you in decision-making. Neither vet nor owner will wish to take a life incorrectly, so joint discussions are a support to both, at such difficult times.

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