

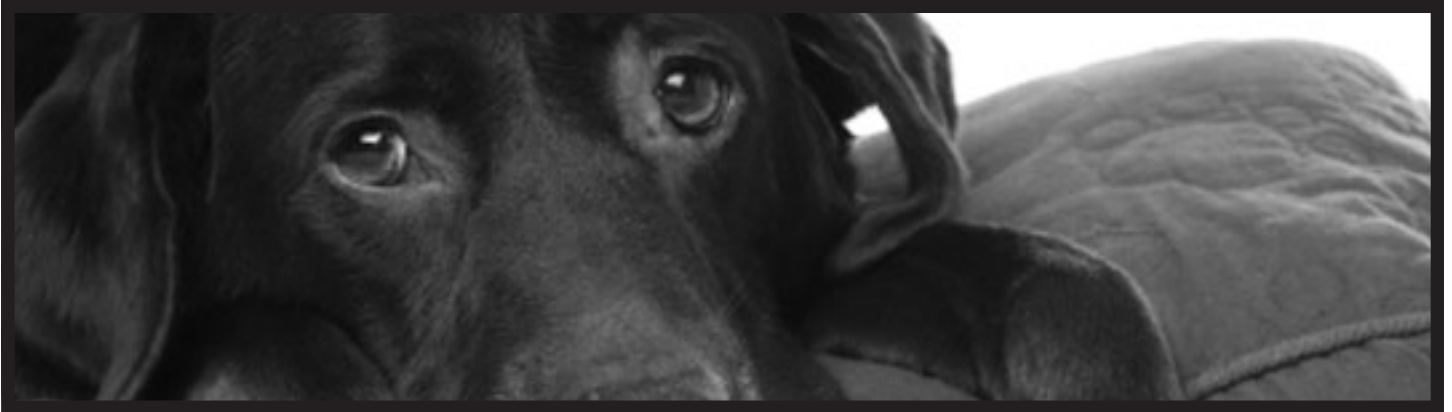


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Animal Hospital of Rowlett and Animal Hospital of Heath Veterinary Hospice Care Program



What is hospice care?

Veterinary Hospice is a program that provides compassionate end-of life care for geriatric and terminally ill patients. Here at AHR/AHH, we are dedicated to maintaining comfort and quality of life for our terminally ill or geriatric pets until natural death occurs or the family elects peaceful euthanasia. We design individualized hospice care programs based on your pet's needs, your needs and beliefs, and goals for your pet. An essential part of the program is education about the disease and aging process, expectations, prognosis, pain management and caring for your pet within the home environment. Hospice care assists owners/pet parents in determining quality of life (QOL) issues and end of life planning for your beloved companion. These services are offered in the clinic and most are also available in the comfort of your home. Home visits can decrease your pet's stress and allow the veterinarian to evaluate your pet in the natural surroundings to better evaluate pain and environmental needs. The hospice program allows pet parents to have time to say good-bye to their beloved friends and companions while cherishing the human-animal bond.

What we offer and why.

Each hospice program is uniquely designed for your individual pet. We take into consideration the individual patients' personality, medical conditions and needs, and the pet family's wishes, goals and budget. We give guidance and help to determine when it is time to let go. We aid in

assisting with the decision and help give owners/pet parents time to come to terms with the situation and time to say good-bye while keeping your pet comfortable. We believe that providing a loving and nurturing environment for both pets and owners/pet parents is essential for allowing peaceful closure at such a difficult time.

AHR/AHH veterinary hospice care program includes but is not limited to the following services: (Most services can also be provided within the comfort of the pet's home as well as in the clinic).

- pain recognition and management
- wound care
- fluid therapy
- medication administration
- nutrition consultations
- sanitary clips
- education about the end stage disease processes
- quality of life assessment
- guidance and counseling on end of life preparation and planning
- hospital day care
- in-home blood draws
- in-home environment assessment and consultations

End of life discussions and decisions

When to know it is time to let go. Making the choice of humane euthanasia for your pet may be one of the most difficult decisions you ever make. We are here to assist you

and support you through the decision making process and assess your pet to determine when humane euthanasia is recommended. Often pet parents hope for their pet to close their eyes and die peacefully in their sleep, this is rarely the case due to the effects of disease on the pet's body. Instead, a natural death may be prolonged, painful and upsetting to witness. One way to assess when the time to say goodbye may be near is by marking the days on the calendar with good days versus bad days. To determine a good day versus bad day you need to take into account multiple things including but not limited to:

- Pain
- Change in attitude (depression, confusion, aggression)
- Difficulty in getting around, incontinence
- Lack of interest in doing the things they love
- Changes in appetite and thirst
- Ability to breath easily

We can customize a quality of life scale to your pets certain disease process to help aid you in this process. Once bad days start to outnumber good days, quality of life may be diminished to a point that peaceful euthanasia should be considered. When the ability to have a healthy human-animal bond is compromised, the end is near. The decision for humane euthanasia is not ever an easy decision but needs to be made if your pet is suffering. The veterinarians at AHR/AHH will help aid you in that decision. If death comes peacefully and painlessly at home, that is okay as well.

What is euthanasia and what is the process of euthanization?

Euthanasia is the assistance of the peaceful passing of your pet by administration of an intravenous solution. It is not a painful process and can be viewed as a gift to your pet as it relieves their suffering and pain when their disease process has progressed to a point that we can no longer keep them comfortable.

Here at AHR we have a special bereavement room designed for you to be able to sit in peace and comfort with your pet during this process. We first place an intravenous catheter to aid in the process of giving the IV injection. For anxious or painful pets we may give a mild sedative prior to placing the IV catheter for their comfort. As pet parents you have the option to be present when we give the intravenous injection or to say your good byes prior to it. It is an individual preference and neither option is wrong. As a service to you, we make a clay paw print for you to take home in remembrance of your beloved pet.

There are options for the final resting place for your pet. For many years we have worked closely with a pet crematorium Pet Rest Memorial. We offer the options for a communal cremation or a private cremation through this company. With



a communal cremation their ashes are spread through the pet cemetery along with other beloved pets that have passed on. With a private cremation their ashes are returned in a wooden cedar box with a brass locket. We can also have an engraved name plate made for the cedar box as well. We do all of the arranging for the pickup and delivery of the ashes back to the clinic for the private cremations and call you when they arrive. If you choose to take your pet home for burial we have cardboard caskets that we can place them in for transport. Also if you have a special request please contact us and we can try and accommodate you. At AHR we strive to have your final goodbye be a peaceful, pain free transition for your beloved pet.

Coping with the passing of your beloved pet and understanding grief.

The pets in our lives are more than just animals. They are our family members, best friends, sources of support, confidantes, and suppliers of unconditional love.

Grieving the loss of your pet is no different than any other significant loss in your life. Grieving is a normal and natural process that needs to be experienced in order to heal. There is an adjustment phase when getting used to the changes in your life, creating new routines and patterns to your days. This can be a difficult adjustment and by understanding the normal grieving process you are better apt to deal with the loss of your beloved pet.

We also have to be aware that children of all ages are affected by the passing of our pets. Children can grieve differently than adults and should not be overlooked during this difficult time. The loss of a pet is often a child's first experience with death and can be a strange and frightening experience for them. There are many resources that can teach us about how children show grief and how we can help support them through their grieving process.

Below is a list of useful websites, book recommendations, and online resources to aid you and your children in coping with the loss of your beloved pet.

Websites

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/PLHI>
http://csuvth.colostate.edu/diagnostic_and_support/argus
http://csuvth.colostate.edu/diagnostic_and_support/argus/involving_children.aspx
<http://www.pet-loss.net>
<http://aplb.org/index.html>
<http://www.hsus.org>

Pet Loss Support Hotlines

- **ASPCA Pet Loss Support Hotline** - (877) 474-3310
- **Ohio State C.A.L.L.** (Companion Animal Listening Line) - 614-292-1823
- **Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine Pet Loss Support Hotline** - 517-432-2696 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (Eastern time)
- **Cornell University Pet Loss Support Hotline** - 607-253-3932 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday evenings (Eastern time)
- **Tufts University Pet Loss Support Hotline** - 508-839-7966 (no hours stated on their web site; call for more information)
- **University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine “C.A.R.E. Pet Loss Support Hotline”** - 877-394-2273
- **University of Florida Pet Loss Support hotline** - 352-392-2235 Leave a message and someone will call you back within 24 hours weekdays; weekend calls are returned on Monday

Published Materials on Grief and Pet Loss

- *Coping with the Loss of a Pet* - Christina M. Lemieux, Wallace R. Clark, 1992
- *Living Through Personal Crisis* - Ann Kaiser Stearns, Ballantine, 1984
- *Maya's First Rose* - Martin Scott Kosins, Open Sky Books, 1992
- *When Your Pet Dies: How to Cope with Your Feeling* - J. Quackenbush & D. Graveline, Simon & Schuster, 1985 (out of print-check with your library)
- *The Interactions Bibliography* (TIB), a journal of resources on human-animal relationships, ISSN 0162-7278, is a current information resource for those who are interested in the multifaceted field of human-animal relationships. TIB is published four times a year by Rocky Dell Resources, 8732 Rock Springs Road, Penryn, California 95663. Note: TIB includes in each issue a section titled Grief & Loss
- *Grieving the Death of a Pet* - Betty J. Carmack, Augsburg Books, January 1, 2003

Books/Resources for Children:

- *Goodbye, Mousie* - Robie Harris, 2004
- *Jasper's Day* - Marjorie Parker, 2002
- *Not Just a Fish* - Hemery, 2000
- *Lifetimes* - B. Mellonie & R. Ingpen, Bantam Books, 1983
- *Oh, Where Has My Pet Gone?* - Sally Sibbett, B. Libby Press, 1991
- *Saying Goodbye to Your Pet: Children Can Learn to Cope With Grief* - Heegaard, 2001
- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* - Judith Viorst, Aladdin Books, 1975
- http://csuvth.colostate.edu/diagnostic_and_support/argus/involving_children.aspx