

What to expect if you need to have your pet euthanized at the Emergency Animal Clinic:

At the EAC we believe in using euthanasia (having an animal “put to sleep”) as a tool to end suffering. We will always ask what the circumstances are that are limiting your pet’s quality of life. This is not intended to second-guess your decision to have the pet euthanized, but to insure that we fully understand the situation.

If you come in to the EAC seeking euthanasia for your pet, please let the person at the front desk know this. If you are unsure if that is the best option for your pet, you can have a veterinarian perform an examination and discuss what treatments may be able to help your pet at that time. Once you are sure that euthanasia is the most appropriate option, we will take the following steps:

- We will discuss options for caring for your pet’s remains. These include taking him or her home for burial there or at a pet cemetery, having the EAC arrange for the pet’s cremation, or arranging cremation yourself through any cremation service you choose. If you opt for cremation, the pet will be cremated individually if you wish to have his/her ashes returned to you. If you do not wish to have the ashes returned, then he/she will be cremated communally with other pets.
- We will place a catheter in the patient’s vein that will allow the euthanasia medication to be given without stress to your companion.
- While we are placing the catheter, we will have you complete any paperwork with the front desk. This will allow you to leave directly after the euthanasia is complete, rather than trying to check out during a very emotional time.
- Depending on the pet’s condition, the veterinarian may ask to administer a sedative prior to the actual euthanasia. You may also request sedation for your pet if you feel that would be in his or her best interest.
- You will be allowed to visit in private with your pet for as long as you need before the euthanasia is performed.
- Once you are ready, the veterinarian will come into the exam room. It is your choice if you would like to be present during the euthanasia.
- The veterinarian will first flush the IV catheter with saline. There is no medication in this injection. It is only to check the catheter to be sure it is in place properly.
- The veterinarian will then administer the euthanasia medication through the catheter. The medication acts very quickly, but in animals with certain medical conditions it may take a few minutes to be effective.
- The veterinarian will use a stethoscope to confirm that your pet’s heartbeat has stopped.
- You may choose to leave as soon as the euthanasia is complete, or you may want to spend additional time with your pet to grieve and say your final good-bye.

If you wish, you can take a lock of fur or other keep-sake from your pet.

We will notify your family veterinarian so that s/he is aware that your pet has been euthanized at EAC.

Please know that every effort will be made to allow you ample time to spend privately with your pet before euthanasia. However, sometimes we see animals that are suffering so much that visitation must be brief. If your pet is having difficulty breathing, we may have to perform euthanasia in the treatment area so that your pet can receive oxygen to minimize distress. If either of these situations occurs, we will make every effort to respect your privacy, and will arrange for you to spend time alone with your pet after the euthanasia has occurred.