



# A Guide to Planning Ahead

Preparing yourself in advance for the death of your pet, while emotionally taxing, is a wise and thoughtful thing to do. Certainly, none of us likes to think of that day, the day our heart will be broken into a million pieces. Thinking about this ahead of time will give you and your family the opportunity to discuss how you would like to memorialize your beloved pet and to celebrate the life that you all shared together.

There are numerous elements to think about regarding the death of your pet and your final wishes. Take this time to reflect upon what your pet will need in respectful death care treatment, as well as the support you will need as a grieving pet parent. Making sure that your beloved pet is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve will be of the utmost importance at this time. Knowing your various options will relieve much of the stress you may have in ensuring what you do is appropriate to not only honor the life of your pet but to ensure they are receiving the care and treatment in death that was important to you for them in life.

## Decision Making for my Pet's Passing

- Who do I/we want to be present for my pet's transition/passing
  - Family members (human and other pets)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Friends  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Where do I hope to say my final good-byes
  - At home, At my veterinary clinic, my pet's favorite place  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do I want something special for the transition/passing
  - Music, flowers, photos, my pet's favorite toys, food, bed  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Final Arrangements

- The final arrangement wish for my pet's body is:
  - Aquamation, Burial, Cremation
- If burial, where?
  - Home, Friend/Family's Home, Local Pet Cemetery
  - Will this town/county/development allow pet burials?
  - Will you always live in the area or have access to the burial ground?
  - Do your religious preferences guide you in one way or another?
  - Did your pet like to be outside or inside? Will this influence your pet's final resting place?

- If aquamation or cremation, will you want the remains returned?
  - Yes or No
  - If the answer is No, you will need to ask your pet death care provider for a “communal” or “group” disposition. Your pet will be aquamated/cremated with other pets, their remains scattered in a designated area.
- Many death care providers will provide a tracking system through the aquamation/cremation process. A “tag” with a unique number will accompany your pet’s body. To ensure the safety, security, and authentication of the aquamation/cremation, ask your aftercare provider about this process.

## Service Options

Many families will also want to have one last time to be with their pet after death, a visitation or wake, if you will. While this may seem like a trivial thing – or possibly something that you consider morbid or odd, this one last time with your pet is valuable time spent. A time to see your pet at peace. A time for your family to pay tribute to their beloved pet and friend. A time to begin the grief journey and to say the final goodbye.

Many times, friends, family members, and other pets in the household will want to have their final goodbye with your pet too. Pets touch so many people during their short lives with us. Allow those around you the opportunity to come together, pay their respects, and support each other.

- My family and I would like a Final-Goodbye Time:
  - Yes or No
- Occasionally families will take this Final Goodbye Time to incorporate their important family/religious rituals. Rituals may look like:
  - Special readings
  - Rituals you and your pet did to say “I Love You”
  - A candle lighting tribute
  - Reading of special poems, remembrances, or a letter to your pet
  - Sharing videos of the pet and your family
- The following rituals are important and will be included in our Final Goodbye Time together: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Memorialization Options

Making a decision on memorialization products is a personal process. This will be reflective of the life shared with your pet, your lifestyle, your personal style, and those items that are reflective of your pet's personality. It's also important to take into consideration where your memorialization pieces will go in your home, or in your yard, and how you want the item to look, either blending in with your décor or making an individual statement. In addition, if you have a large pet family, consider a memorialization piece where all the pets can be together.

There are various memorialization products:

- Rock/Garden Flagstone
- An urn that is reflective of your decorating style
- A personalized urn made to look like the pet
- An urn with paw prints to show your love of animals
- Locket jewelry to hold a bit of the pet's ashes or fur



The desired memorialization items to remember our pet are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The personalization of your memorial pieces will truly make them as unique as your relationship was with your pet. From an inscription on an urn or jewelry piece to the saying on the rock or marker, your sentimental words will create a true reflection of the love you have for your special pet. Hearing other friends and family member's stories is certainly a wonderful way to reflectively pay tribute to your pet and get everyone involved in honoring their life. Consider what you think of when reflecting on your pet's life:

- A nickname
- A saying

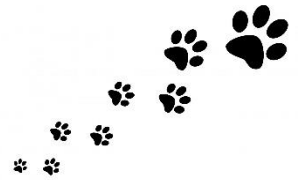
Other ways to personalize memorialization:

- A photo
- Personal paw print or nose print
- A piece of fur, whisker, nail clipping
- A piece of art to depict the pet's personality
- A frame to hold a photo, paw print, nose print, locket of fur
- Memorial note cards, post on social media
- A way to show your pet's love of their favorite (bone, food, etc)





## A Tribute to My Pet's Life



Pet's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date/Gotcha Date – Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Where our life started together: \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings – Pet & Human: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Toy(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Activity (s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Least Favorite Thing: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Friends: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Place to Sleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Memories: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

With the choices of memorialization items that have been made, we want the following unique personalization: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_