

Euthanasia ...When is it time?

I am often asked "When is it time to euthanize my pet?" That answer may be different for every person, pet, and situation. Many of us wish that maybe our older or sick pet will just die in their sleep. Although that would make things easier for us, it is often not the case and sometimes we need to make a very kind decision for our beloved pet. When considering euthanasia for your pet you should ask yourself a few questions such as:

1. Is my pet suffering or in pain long term?
2. Is he able to eat, drink and go outside for defecation (bm) and urination?
3. Is there a treatment for the illness to bring them back to normal?
4. What is her quality of life?

The next question I hear is: "What is the procedure?" or "How do you do it?" or "Is it painful for my pet?"

Although every case is a little different, I will describe here the routine euthanasia procedure.

First, this can often be done at home, which is usually easier for both the pet and the owner. It can also be scheduled in the veterinary clinic. I first sedate or anesthetize the pet with a small injection either into a muscle or vein which is pretty painless. Afterwards, your pet will fall asleep over the next 2-5 minutes and you are welcome to hold them, pet them, talk to them, etc. After they are fully asleep and not feeling anything I then give them a second injection which euthanizes them. Their heart and breathing stop shortly after and they do not feel this at all.

This is a very peaceful, kind and painless procedure. Most owners want to be present for the whole procedure while others do not. Whatever you are comfortable with is the right decision. After your pet is euthanized, I make a complimentary clay paw print and hair clipping for you to keep as a remembrance of your pet. I have had clients hang these on the wall or make nice shadow boxes.

The last question or actually option is what to do with your pet afterwards. I offer 3 options. The first would be to have your pet individually cremated with the remains returned and I can take care of this for you. I use *Precious Pets* who do a fantastic and very caring job. The next option is to bury your pet. If you opt for this you should check with local laws and also bury the pet about 4 feet deep so as to not be disturbed by other animals. The last option is a group burial through Kalamazoo County Animal Services.

Although this is often a very difficult decision to come to for a beloved family member, it can be a very kind and peaceful procedure. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office and we can talk about your situation.