

In-Home Euthanasia Services

We want to help provide and arrange gentle and compassionate end of life services that you feel are right for your pet and your family. This time is all about your pet and family, and so we want to help you honor your pet the way that feels best to you.

❖ Planning a Time & Scheduling an Appointment

- ◆ All appointments are mobile, meaning in your home. *We do not have a clinic location where we see patients.*
- ◆ We always try to be available when needed, especially for our current palliative and hospice care patients.
 - *Dr. Cook must be able to park in close proximity to your home as he is often carrying a number of bags and materials. You will need to ensure that parking is available, and you are responsible for parking fees/tolls.*
 - Our availability is based on the appointments already scheduled, but we try to be available when needed.
 - We usually see our first appointment at ~10:00am and our last appointment ~3—4:00pm, Monday-Friday.
 - You may decide to schedule an appointment for euthanasia in advance, and if so, we can try to find a time that is best for you and your pet. It is always ok to plan for a time when we can ensure that your pet's last day is a good day, and when it is possible for your whole family to be present.
 - While evening, weekend, and other after-hours appointments are limited, they may be to be available if scheduled in advance (*additional charges apply*).
 - If you have an emergency with your pet (whether during or outside of regular clinic hours), we will do our very best to help if possible; however, after-hours and emergency appointments are generally reserved for current palliative and hospice care patients (*additional charges apply*).
- ◆ We allow up to an hour for in-home euthanasia appointments—we do not want to have to rush in any way.
 - We can adjust the timing (slower or faster) to what feels most comfortable to you and your pet.
 - If you would like to arrange for a longer appointment, this can be done in advance, but may not be possible if not scheduled in advance (*additional charges apply*).

❖ Finding a Comfortable Location in Your Home

- ◆ Any room or area of your home is ok, but we do want to make sure that you and your pet will be comfortable and that there will be enough space for all who plan to be present.
 - Choosing an open space where we will not be restricted in movement or cramped is usually best.
 - *For large dogs, it is best to be on the ground floor to help facilitate aftercare and transport. It can be very difficult to carry large dogs down the stairs and through tight spaces.*
 - Additional family members (including children) and friends (human, dog, cat, or other) are welcome to be present, or to visit before or after euthanasia services.
 - Your pet might like to lie on their special blanket or bed with a favorite toy nearby.
 - If your pet is still eating, we encourage you to give them their favorite foods and treats.
- ◆ If you and your pet would prefer to be outside, that is also possible (*weather conditions and location permitting*) and as long as we can be in a safe, private, fenced-in area.

❖ Our Gentle Euthanasia Procedure

- ◆ This process is always individualized to your pet and your family's wishes in every way that we can. The most important thing to know is that it will be very gentle and will cause no pain.
 - On arrival, we will make sure that your pet is as comfortable as possible, and we can give pain medication immediately if needed.
 - There is no part of this procedure that will be hidden from you or that you cannot be present to see. Likewise, if there is any part that you do not want to see or be present to see, that is also ok.
 - If you would like private time with your pet during the procedure or after, the doctor can step into a different room or outside for a period of time to allow private visitation.
- ◆ We generally give a series of three medications (injections) to ensure that your pet is as comfortable as possible. *Please let the doctor know if you have any concerns about your pet's comfort.*
 - The first medication (pain reliever and anti-nausea medication) will help to control any pain and discomfort your pet may be feeling (and may cause mild sedation). This medication usually takes just a few minutes to reach full effect. We want to make sure that there is no pain in these last moments.
 - *For pets who are very sensitive to needles or injections, we have the option to start with an oral gel instead to help ensure your pet's comfort.*
 - The second medication (sedative) will help your pet slowly relax into a sleep-like state, providing sedation slowly and gently and taking effect over about 5 minutes.
 - By providing this sedative medication, we will prevent your pet from having any fear, anxiety, or discomfort and will ensure that no restraint or uncomfortable positioning is needed.
 - *This may be a time when you would like some privacy with your pet, and if so, the doctor can step out.*
 - After your pet is fully relaxed and you feel that it is time, the third and final medication (anesthetic for euthanasia) is given. Although this medication takes effect quickly (usually within 1-2 minutes or less), your pet will not feel any discomfort because of the medications we have already given.

❖ Deceased Pet Services

Sometimes it is our plan for our pet to die without the intervention of euthanasia, and sometimes pets pass away unexpectedly. In these cases, we are still able to help facilitate aftercare arrangements for your pet.

- ◆ If your pet passes away overnight (or outside of clinic hours), it is ok to wait until we are opened to call us (or to leave a message on the regular line) so that we can help make aftercare arrangements the following day.

❖ Hospice-Assisted Natural Death

If your beliefs do not include the intervention of euthanasia to help your pet at a time when we can no longer help them maintain a good quality of life, hospice-assisted natural death (also called palliated natural death) can help you and your beloved pet navigate this difficult time.

- ◆ If this is the best way to help you and your pet, we will need to develop a plan in advance that gives you and your pet the specific support needed to prevent suffering and ease, not hasten, your pet's transition.

Aftercare Arrangements & Memorial Keepsakes

It is our promise to provide the most gentle, dignified, and respectful aftercare services available for your pet. Based on your wishes for your pet, we can assist in aftercare arrangements, but of course you may also decide to make your own arrangements.

❖ Considerations for Aftercare Arrangements

- ♦ If we are providing aftercare services for cremation, we will bring a sheet or blanket to wrap your pet to ensure that their transportation can be discrete.
- ♦ We can also use one of your blankets or sheets, but we regret that we are not able to return any items you send with your pet. Only natural fibers (cotton, wool, silk, etc.) can be cremated.
- ♦ **The doctor may need help carrying your pet from your home to the doctor's car for transport.**
 - It may not be possible for the doctor to carry your pet to the car unassisted (or sometimes at all).
 - The doctor will bring a stretcher if needed to assist in carrying larger pets with dignity. *There may be additional charges if pets need to be carried extended distances, such as to remote parking or down multiple flights of stairs.*
 - The doctor does not usually bring an assistant to in-home euthanasia appointments but may be able to if needed to help in carrying your pet (*additional charges apply*).
 - For pets weighing less than 45#, the doctor may need assistance from 1-2 family members or friends to help in carrying your pet from your home to car.
 - For pets weighing more than 45# pounds, the doctor will need assistance from 2-3 family members or friends to help in carrying your pet from your home to the car.
- ♦ Home Burial: Please see information below for considerations and guidelines.
- ♦ Extended Visitation: If you would like to have additional time with your pet for extended visitation after in-home euthanasia, we can arrange return to pick up your pet (*additional charges apply*).
- ♦ Delay of Aftercare Services While Considering Options for Aftercare: You might find that you need more time to make a decision regarding aftercare services. If so, we can arrange to hold your pet's body in cold storage for up to 7 days (*additional charges apply*).

❖ Cremation and Burial Services

- ◆ We work exclusively with Trusted Journey Willowbrook (formerly Hinsdale Pet Memorial Services) for cremation and burial services. We trust them to carry out services with care and respect.
- ◆ For more information about Trusted Journey and the services and products they offer, please visit their website: <https://www.trustedjourney.com/>. Phone: 630-323-5120
- ◆ **Private Cremation:** *Ashes can be returned to you.* Your pet will be individually cremated, meaning no other animals will be cremated at the same time.
 - If you prefer private cremation, but do not want to have ashes returned, we would be honored to scatter your pet's ashes in Trusted Journey's Wildflower Garden.
 - Attended Private Cremation: You can be present for your pet's private cremation if desired. You will need to make all arrangements directly with Trusted Journey (Willowbrook Location, Phone: 630-323-5120).
- ◆ **Communal (Group) Cremation:** *Ashes cannot be returned to you.* Your pet will be cremated in a small group and ashes will be scattered in the Butterfly Garden at Hinsdale Animal Cemetery.
- ◆ **Burial at [Hinsdale Animal Cemetery](#):** You will need to make all arrangements directly with Trusted Journey (Willowbrook Location, Phone: 630-323-5120).



❖ Memorial Keepsakes

- ◆ **Urns:** your pet's ashes will be returned in an Integrity Earth Urn, which is a beautiful urn crafted from handmade paper inlaid with flower petals. These urns are biodegradable and so can be buried if desired but can also serve as a beautiful permanent urn or placeholder until choosing a custom urn.
 - *Ashes are sealed in a bag and can easily be removed to be scattered or transferred to a different urn if desired.*
 - A full selection of custom urns and cremation jewelry is also available from Trusted Journey (please visit their website for more information).



- ♦ **Fur Clippings:** a lock of fur sealed in a vellum envelope.
 - *Please tell us if there is a special area of fur to use.*
- ♦ **Ink Paw & Nose Prints:** your pet's paw or nose print in black ink on a custom hand-printed card
 - Handmade by Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics
- ♦ **Terra Cotta Clay Pawprints:** an impression of your pet's pawprint in terra cotta polymer clay
 - Handmade by Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics
 - We will stamp your pet's name on the back and bake the pawprint for you.
 - *Please request holes for hanging if you would like to be able to hang your pet's pawprint as an ornament.*



- ♦ **White Clay Pawprints:** an impression of your pet's pawprint in white polymer clay
 - Handmade by Trusted Journey
 - Your pet's name can be printed on the front in black ink if desired and the pawprint will be baked for you; *holes for hanging are not available.*



❖ Return of Ashes & Memorial Keepsakes

- ♦ Your pet's ashes and keepsakes will always be handled with care and are hand delivered to us at Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics. *If you would prefer, ashes and keepsakes prepared by Trusted Journey can instead be picked up or shipped directly from Trusted Journey.*
 - We will contact you as soon as everything is ready (usually within 1-2 weeks).
 - We want to return your pet's ashes and memorial keepsakes to you as soon as you are ready, but also understand that you may need more time, and so we can keep everything safe for you.
- ♦ **Scheduled Pick-Up or Delivery from Chicago Veterinary Geriatrics Office**
 - We have office hours throughout the week and some Saturday mornings, and we will work with you to find a good time for you to come by.
 - Scheduled home delivery is also available (*additional charges apply*).
- ♦ **Pick-Up or Mailing from Trusted Journey**
 - 6400 S. Bentley Ave, Willowbrook, IL 60527; 630-323-5120; <https://www.trustedjourney.com/>
 - Available by appointment during office hours, please call prior to pick-up.
 - Direct shipping is also available if desired (*additional charges apply*)

Home Burial & Extended Home Visitation

❖ Caring for Your Pet's Body During Extended Visitation and/or Prior to Burial

- ◆ Leakage of bodily fluids may occur—disposable under-pads, baby wipes, and waterless shampoo are effective ways to manage cleanliness and reduce odor
- ◆ The development of muscle rigidity (rigor mortis) can occur quickly, or over a period of hours
- ◆ Most animals will not close their eyes and/or keep their eyes closed after death
- ◆ Occasionally, there may be minor muscle spasms that occur after death
- ◆ Temperature guidelines during extended visitation or prior to burial:
 - Warm/Hot Temperatures (>60°F): cold storage is needed within 2-8 hours
 - Cool Temperatures (~40-60 °F): cold storage is needed within 8-12 hours
 - Cold temperatures (<40 °F): cold storage is needed within 12-24 hours

❖ Choosing a Burial Site

- ◆ Burial of a pet is generally permitted on private property, as long as you own the property or have permission from the owner
- ◆ Burial of a pet on public grounds is generally prohibited
- ◆ *Please check your local regulations as they vary*
- ◆ Consider also any potential future plans for landscaping or moving

❖ Additional Preparations and Considerations for Burial

- ◆ The grave (hole) should be at least 4 feet deep, at least 4 feet above the ground water table, and covered with at least 4 feet of earth
 - Avoid rocky areas and tree roots (such as under a tree)
 - Maintain a 100-foot separation from wells or waterways
 - Be aware of any buried water, gas or power lines
 - Do not bury in a low-lying area, gully, or ditch as these areas are prone to flooding
- ◆ It is best to avoid burying synthetic fibers and plastic bags if possible as they interfere with natural processes
 - Cotton, wool, bamboo fiber, and silk are better options to wrap your pet
 - Caskets are also available for purchase online if desired
- ◆ You may wish to either purchase a memorial stone or gather stones or rocks to mark and cover the burial site
 - This provides protection from accidental uncovering by humans, pets, or wild animals
 - Memorial stones are available for purchase locally and online