

Pre-Planning Guide for Pet Loss



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Our Story	4
Health Information	5
Pet Care Sheet	6
Treatment Options	7
Questions For My Vet	8
Bucket List	9
Honoring The Journey	11
End Of Life Plan	12
Remembering	13
Aftercare Options	14
Grief Resources	15

This is a comprehensive guide, please use only the portions that are helpful to you.



Why is Pre-Planning Important?



This interactive workbook is designed to walk you through the twilight stage of your pet’s life, providing space to make decisions about care while encouraging all family members to collaborate and explore options.

Important people who should be involved in planning:

Pre-Planning for a pet's death is difficult, but so important. It enables the family to emotionally prepare, opening discussions about care options while addressing spiritual and financial considerations. It's a compassionate way to navigate the challenging journey of losing an important member of your family.

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.”

-ELEANOR ROOSEVELT-

Our Story

*As you start the planning process, consider writing a letter to your pet or about your pet.
What is their story? Use the questions below as a guide.*

Birth Date/Gotcha Date:

How did you find each other?

Nickname(s):

Pet & human siblings:

Favorite things:

Favorite places:

Favorite food:

Favorite memories:

Health Information

As you navigate this time, it is important to list your pet's medical issues and current treatments so that you can address each one with your local veterinarian or hospice veterinarian.

Diagnosis (if any):

Medical issues:

Medications and supplements:

Current treatments:

Consider comfort care, which provides symptom relief as you navigate end of life decision making. List your pet's current challenges so that you can discuss comfort care options with your veterinarian.

Biggest challenges:

*"You never know how strong you are,
until being strong is your only choice."*

-BOB MARLEY-

Pet Care Sheet

for use when primary owner is away

NAME: _____

MEDICAL ISSUES: _____

SUPPLEMENTS & MEDICATIONS: _____

DAILY ROUTINE: _____

PREFERRED
VETERINARY HOSPITAL _____

PREFERRED AFTER HOURS
VETERINARY HOSPITAL _____

PRIMARY EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

PHONE: _____

SECONDARY EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

PHONE: _____

IN THE EVENT OF MY ABSENCE I GIVE PERMISSION TO _____

TO MAKE MEDICAL DECISIONS UP TO \$ _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Treatment Options

Many times we are given multiple treatment options which can be confusing. Writing the options given can aid with family discussions about the next right move for your loved one.

Follow these prompts for each option you have been presented with. Start by defining your treatment goals. If you are unsure of options, use these questions to consult with a veterinarian.

Goals of treatment:

Length of treatment (if known):

What are the side effects associated with this treatment:

Positive impact of treatment:

Expenses associated with treatment:

Is hospitalization required for treatment:

Will treatment give us more time together:

Bucket List

Many times, when we confront the impending loss of a loved one, we reflect upon the activities we cherish and will miss sharing with them. It can be beneficial to compile a list of activities to enjoy with your companion in the upcoming days and weeks. If possible, get the entire family involved in making a bucket list. It can be a joyful process.

What are some special moments that you can share with your loved one?:

Who should visit?:

Are there special places to revisit or experience together?:

What favorite foods or treats should you offer?:

Other ideas:

- Throw a celebratory party for your pet.
- Make a gourmet meal for your pet.
- Set up a photo session.

Some ideas to help get you started:



([Senior Dog Bucket List Ideas](#))

Honoring The Journey

Who should be included in the end of life decision making?:

Would a quality of life assessment with a hospice/palliative care veterinarian be helpful?:

Who is available in my area to do in person assessments?:

Would a virtual quality of life consultation be helpful? If yes, who should I use?:

There are several online quality of life worksheets which may help. These resources provide a quality of life scale that you can print. This allows you to track your answers and compare changes from the prior weeks or months.

Dog Quality of Life Scales



Cat Quality of Life Scales



"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

-WINNIE THE POOH-

End of Life Plan

Saying goodbye is heart breaking, but it is a selfless act of love that provides peace and freedom from suffering.

Where will the end of life appointment happen (home, veterinary hospital, favorite outdoor space)?:

Who will be present?:

Will you have a ceremony before, during or after?:

If they are still able to enjoy food, would you have a special treat like chocolate cake, lobster or steak? What would my pet enjoy?:

Will other pets be present?:

Most housemates are very respectful of the dying process and are not disruptive. If you feel it would be best for them not to be present, then it is recommended that they see their friend after they have passed before any after care arrangements.



Aftercare Options

There are several options for your loved ones care once they have passed.

HOME BURIAL

During warmer months, home burial is an option in Maine as long as you follow guidelines established by the state and your local municipality.



[Burial
Guidelines](#)

GREEN CREMATION/AQUAMATION

Aquamation is a gentle process that uses warm water and alkalinity to accelerate the natural breakdown of organic matter. The use of less fossil fuels results in less negative environmental impacts.



[Tranquil
Waters
Aquamation](#)

FLAME BASED CREMATION

Flame-based cremation uses flame and heat to reduce the pet's remains to bone fragments, or cremated remains.



[Fluke's
Aftercare](#)

"If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever"

-DAVID ELLSWORTH-

Remembering

*There are many ways we can honor our loved one once they've left the physical world.
Take the time to find what works best for your family.*

- Write an obituary.
- Set up a space for pictures and memorial items.
- Paint/draw a picture of your loved one.
- Plant something in their honor.
- Write a poem.
- Light a candle in their honor.

Writing an Obituary

We've put together some ideas to help get you started.

- How did you meet your loved one? Describe the process and/or feeling.
- What were the first few days like in their forever home?
- Did they have any favorite people or other pets?
- Did they have a favorite activity or place to visit?
- Describe your loved ones unique personality, what was your favorite quirk about them?
- What impact did they have on your life and did they teach you lessons?

"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

-DR. SEUSS-

Grief Resources

Helpful Websites

www.veterinarywisdom/petparents.com
www.pethospice.bluepearlvet.com
www.twoheartspetlosscenter.com
www.rainbowbridge.com
www.petloss.com
www.aplb.org

Grief Counselors

Rev. Karen Orr, Scarborough ME |
korr@maine.rr.com |
Phone counseling, private counseling,
workshops & funeral planning.
Support groups are held on the 4th Sunday of
each month.

Kathy Sherry, MS, LCPC | Certified Pet Loss
Counselor Pet Loss Pathways, LLC |
www.petlosspathways.com |
Kathy@PetLossPathways.com | 207-899-6948

ASPCA National Pet Loss Hotline | 1-877-474-
3310 | The psychologist and grief counselor
Dr. Stephanie LaFarge PhD is available 12pm-
12am ET | www.aspca.org

Argus Institute at CSU Veterinary Medical
Center |
1-970-297-1242 9am-5pm MST |
www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu

Pet Loss Support Groups

Vet Vine offers small online pet loss support
groups | www.vetvine.com

Pet Loss Books for Children

“The Goodbye Book” Todd Parr (ages 2-5)
“When a Pet Dies” Fred Rogers (ages 4-8)
“Dog Heaven” & “Cat Heaven” Cynthia Rylant
(ages 3-7)
“The Rainbow Bridge: A Visit to Pet Paradise”
Adrian
Raeside (ages 8-12)
“Remembering My Pet: A Kid’s Own Spiritual
Remembering Workbook for When a Pet
Dies” Nechama Liss-Levinson (ages 8-12)
“Maddie’s Wings: A Lesson in Love” Tamera
Rickman
(ages 8-12)

Pet Loss Books for Parents

“Pet Parents: A Journey Through
Unconditional Love and Grief” Coleen Ellis
“Grieving the Death of a Pet” Betty Carmack
“Sorrow on the Loss of Your Pet” M. Anderson
“Pet Loss and Human Bereavement” W. Kay
“Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between
Parent and Child” E. Grollman
“When Children Grieve” J.W. James
“Healing the Bereaved Child” A. Wolfelt, PhD

Pets Grieve Too



[Reactions of Other Pets in the Home](#)



[Helping Your Grieving Pet After the
Loss of a Loved One](#)

*“Those we love never truly leave us.
There are things that death cannot touch.”*

-JACK THORNE-



207-361-7145

havenvethospice.com

havenvethospice@gmail.com