

Coping with the Loss of Your Pet

You may be finding it extremely difficult to deal with the loss of your beloved pet. It is important to remember that everyone grieves in their own way: You may find that sharing your feelings with family and friends helps. You might also consider memorializing your pet by helping another pet in need. The resources on this page can provide a starting point for you to deal with your loss in the best way for you. If you would like additional information or counseling, please contact our office or a pet loss support group in your area.

Meaningful Ways to Honor a Pet's Memory

- Write a letter to your pet expressing your feelings.
- Have a proper burial for your pet.
- Place a bench with a nameplate or inscription beside your pet's grave.
- Put your pet's ashes in a potted plant, urn, or under a favorite tree.
- Plant a tree or a bush in your pet's honor.
- Have a portrait of your pet drawn from a favorite photo.
- Place your pet's identification tags on a key ring.
- Volunteer at a local humane organization.
- Make a donation in your pet's name to a local veterinary hospital or humane organization.

Resources

Books for Children

- Morehead D: *A Special Place for Charlee: A Child's Companion Through Pet Loss*. Broomfield, CO, Partners in Publishing, LLC, 1996.
- Rogers F: *When a Pet Dies*. New York, GP Putnam's Sons, 1988.
- Rylant C: *Cat Heaven*. New York, Scholastic, 1997.
- Rylant C: *Dog Heaven*. New York, Scholastic, 1995.
- Viorst J: *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*. New York, Atheneum, 1997.
- Wilhelm H: *I'll Always Love You*. New York, Crown Publishing Group, 1985.

Books and Web Resources for Adults

- American Veterinary Medical Association's Care for Animals. Available at www.avma.org/careforanimals/CFASiteindex.asp.
- Anderson Allen M: Pet Loss Support Page. Available at: www.pet-loss.net.
- Montgomery M, Montgomery H: *A Final Act of Caring: Ending the Life of an Animal Friend*. Minneapolis, MN, Montgomery Press, 1993.
- Montgomery M, Montgomery H: *Good-Bye My Friend*. Minneapolis, MN, Montgomery Press, 1993.
- Quackenbush J: *When Your Pet Dies: How to Cope with Your Feelings*. New York, Pocket Books, 1985.

If I Should Grow Frail

If it should be that I grow frail and weak
And pain does keep me from my sleep,
Then will you do what must be done
For this – the last battle – can't be won.

You will be sad I understand
But don't let grief then stay your hand.
For on this day, more than the rest
Your love and friendship must stand the test.
We have had so many happy years,
You wouldn't want me to suffer so
When the time comes, please, let me go.

Take me to where my needs they'll tend,
Only, stay with me till the end.
And hold me firm and speak to me
Until my eyes no longer see.

I know in time you will agree
It is a kindness you do to me.
Although my tail its last has waved,
From pain and suffering I have been saved.

Don't grieve that it must now be you
Who had to decide this thing to do.
We've been so close – we two – these years
Don't let your heart hold any tears.

Author Unknown

Pet Loss Support Hotlines

Cornell University, 607-253-3932
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
6:00 PM–9:00 PM EST

The Iams Company, 888-332-7738
Weekdays 8:00 AM–5:00 PM EST

Michigan State University, 517-432-2696
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
6:30 PM–9:30 PM EST

The Ohio State University, 614-292-1823
Hours vary

Tufts University, 508-839-7966
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
6:00 PM–9:00 PM EST

University of California, Davis, 530-752-4200
Weekdays 6:30 PM–9:30 PM PST

Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary
Medicine, 540-231-8038
Tuesday and Thursday
6:00 PM–9:00 PM EST