



Hospice & End of Life Care

Hospice & End of Life Care: Choosing the best option for your pet

For cats that are approaching end of life, cat families have several options. In all cases, the desire is for their beloved companion to **spend his or her last days in dignity and free from pain while enjoying simple pleasures with the ones they love.**



Your veterinarian at The Cat Practice will provide you with complete information on: **1) Hospice care, 2) Hospice care with euthanasia and 3) Euthanasia**

In helping you make a decision, you will be provided with our **Feline quality of life assessment** for you to complete, as well as information on **How to tell if your cat has good quality of life.** You may also want to involve family and friends in helping you make your decision.

No pet should suffer or experience discomfort during his or her last days. We practice the same comfort care as human-quality hospice and offer this to cat families who prefer a more natural, but still pain-free alternative. In all cases, the decision must be made based on your cat's quality of life and comfort. We hope this information helps you with this never-easy decision. – The Cat Practice

1) Hospice care

Hospice makes no attempt to prolong life or hasten death. The goal of hospice care is to keep pets as alert and pain-free as possible, allowing them to live their remaining days in comfort, in their own homes.

For advanced stage and terminally ill cats, hospice is compassionate end of life care that allows pets to pass on naturally, with dignity and respect, and in the least amount of pain. **Hospice helps families make the determination early to stop certain treatments and tests that unnecessarily prolong their pet's life. In this way, hospice not only helps eliminate suffering, but also eliminates the cost of unnecessary veterinary care.**



Our veterinarians and nursing staff work closely together to develop a personalized hospice plan for each pet that provides details on everything from pain management to enhancing your kitty's surroundings and quality of life. Our hospice nurse provides personal care for each patient and caregiver support as needed.

Hospice helps families celebrate the human-animal bond and create special moments with their pet that they will cherish forever.



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As a pet family, you will want to know that hospice care:

- Provides end-of-life care, at home, in familiar surroundings.
- Seeks to make your pet comfortable through pain management and environmental changes to make daily routines easier and more enjoyable.
- Is an alternative to euthanasia which is used as a last resort only when your pet is in serious chronic pain or distress.
- Enables the pet's family to participate in end of life care.
- Includes instruction for family members on how to detect and respond to signs of pain in their pet and to administer multi-modality pain control.
- Includes support for the whole family to help them experience the love of their pet while coping at this most difficult time.



2) Hospice care with euthanasia

With hospice care, euthanasia is used only as a last resort when it becomes evident that your pet's illness has progressed and is causing serious chronic pain or distress.

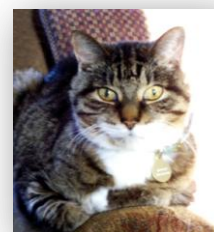
Using our **Feline quality of life assessment**, your veterinarian will discuss with you what your cat's changing behaviors may mean and how to tell if your cat's quality of life has changed. With euthanasia, your cat will be given a sedative and will appear to be sleeping before being given the euthanasia solution. Your pet will feel no pain; the procedure takes only a few minutes. Euthanasia can be performed either at The Cat Practice, or in the comfort of your home. It is a personal decision as to whether or not you would like to be with your pet in his or her final moments.

3) Euthanasia

In some cases, when a cat is suffering with little chance to alleviate pain or discomfort, euthanasia may be the most humane alternative. This would apply to cats that:

- Have been seriously injured or maimed
- Have a rapidly progressing illness that hampers breathing, swallowing or normal eating
- Are unable to stand or move

As described above, euthanasia is a painless process in which a pet is given a strong sedative followed by a euthanasia drug. This can be done at your veterinarian's office or in the comfort of your home. It's your decision as to whether or not you would like to be with your pet during this time.



Hootie's story

Hootie was 15 when adopted from a local shelter. When he started losing weight, it was diagnosed that Hootie was in kidney failure. Under the care of The Cat Practice, Hootie lived for 10 wonderful months and was put into hospice care for the last couple weeks of his life. With the help of a pain patch, Hootie passed naturally at home. We would not have traded those last days for anything. – Hootie's family, Sylvan Lake, MI
See **Farewell to Hootie** at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQ3mtuJvuTM>