

# When Love Means Letting Go

A Compassionate Guide to Pet Euthanasia

The  
Kindest  
Goodbye



WRITTEN BY: **THE KINDEST GOODBYE**

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# Introduction



## From Dr Tom Milton

As a veterinarian, I have walked alongside many families at the most difficult moments of their lives with their pets.

The decision to say goodbye is never simple. It is emotional, deeply personal, and often filled with uncertainty. This guide was created from years of end-of-life care and from listening to the families who trusted me to care for their animals with kindness and respect. Its purpose is not to tell you what to do, but to support you, explain what to expect, and help you feel less alone. At The Kindest Goodbye, we believe a peaceful passing, when the time is right, is one.

Best Regards,

**DR TOM MILTON**  
**VETERINARIAN AND FOUNDER, THE KINDEST GOODBYE**



**“Grief is love with  
nowhere to go”**

**Jamie Anderson**



# 01

## MAKING THE DECISION WITH LOVE

If you are reading this, it means you care deeply about your pet.

Thinking about euthanasia is never easy. It often comes after weeks, months, or even years of loving care, hoping things will improve. Many pet parents feel guilt, doubt, or fear that they are giving up too soon. These feelings are normal.





Choosing euthanasia is not about giving up. It is about recognising when love means letting go.

Euthanasia may be considered when a pet is no longer able to enjoy the things that once brought them comfort or happiness. This can include ongoing pain, distress, confusion, or a decline in their ability to move, eat, or rest peacefully.

There is no perfect moment. Waiting too long can sometimes lead to unnecessary suffering. Acting too soon can feel overwhelming. What matters most is that the decision is made with compassion, awareness, and love. You are not alone in this process. Many families walk this path, and support is available every step of the way.

Gentle reminder

Choosing a peaceful goodbye is a final act of care.

# Quality of Life Considerations

Quality of life is about how your pet experiences each day, not just about medical conditions or diagnoses. It can help to gently observe your pet over time and ask simple, honest questions.

## **Consider how your pet is coping physically:**

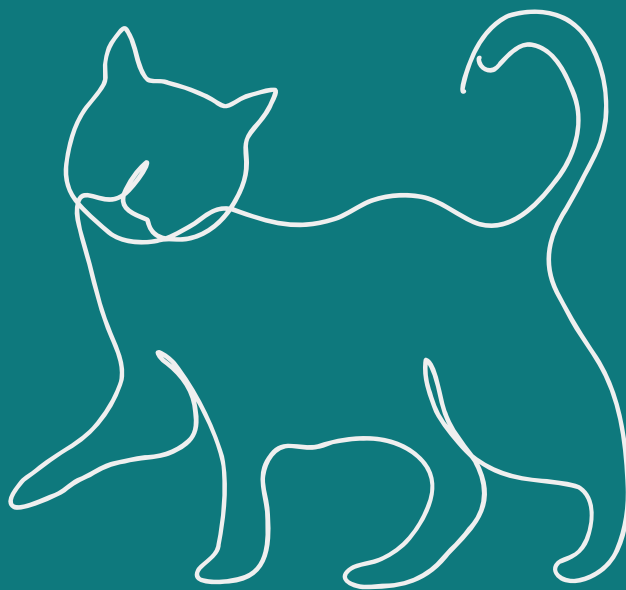
- Are they in pain or discomfort that cannot be managed well
- Are they struggling to walk, stand, or lie down
- Are they eating and drinking comfortably
- Consider their emotional wellbeing:
- Do they still enjoy interaction or favourite activities
- Are they withdrawn, anxious, or restless
- Do they seem confused or distressed
- Consider daily moments:
- Are there more bad days than good days
- Can they rest peacefully
- Do they still experience joy, even briefly

It can be helpful to write these observations down. Patterns often become clearer when seen over several days rather than one difficult moment. Trust your instincts. You know your pet better than anyone. Discussing these observations with your veterinarian can also bring clarity and reassurance.

### **Gentle reminder**

*Love means listening when your pet can no longer tell you how they feel.*

Take a moment to review our [Quality of Life checklist](#).



TRUST YOUR HEART

QUALITY OF LIFE CHECKLIST

Physical Comfort

- Can walk, stand, and rest comfortably
- Is eating and drinking well
- Pain is manageable

Emotional Wellbeing

- Enjoys interaction or favours
- Appears relaxed and calm
- Seems content

Daily Moments

- More good days than bad days
- Can rest peacefully
- Still finds joy, even briefly

THINKS THE WAY

# 03

## WHAT THE EUTHANASIA PROCESS IS LIKE

Many families fear the unknown.

Understanding what happens can help ease anxiety. Euthanasia is designed to be calm, gentle, and pain free.

The process usually includes:

1. Time to say hello and goodbye
2. Gentle sedation so your pet becomes relaxed and sleepy
3. A final medication that allows them to pass peacefully

Your pet is not aware of fear or pain during this process. Once sedated, they drift into a deep sleep before passing quietly.

You may choose to sit with your pet, hold them, speak to them, or simply be nearby. There is no right or wrong way to be present.

Some pets take a few deep breaths. Others pass very quietly. These are natural physical responses and do not mean discomfort.

Veterinary professionals move at a pace that respects both your pet and your family.

**Gentle reminder**

*Your presence can be a source of comfort, even in silence.*





# 04

## In-Home or Clinic Euthanasia

Both in-home and clinic euthanasia are compassionate options. The right choice depends on your pet, your family, and your circumstances.

Every family's situation is different. Some pets feel safest in their own home, surrounded by familiar scents and quiet comfort. Others may already be receiving care in a clinic where trusted professionals are nearby. What matters most is creating an environment where your pet feels secure and where you feel supported enough to be present in the moment.

Taking a few minutes to reflect on what would feel calmest for both of you can help bring clarity to this decision.



### **In-home euthanasia may offer:**

- Familiar surroundings
- Less stress from travel
- A calm and private environment
- The ability for family members to be present



### **Clinic euthanasia may be suitable when:**

- Urgent medical support is needed
- Home visits are not available
- The family feels more supported in a clinical setting

Neither option is more loving than the other. What matters is that your pet feels safe and that you feel supported in your decision.

At The Kindest Goodbye, we believe comfort and dignity should always guide the experience, wherever it takes place.

### **Gentle reminder**

*There is no wrong choice when it is made with care.*

# 05

## AFTERCARE AND WHAT COMES NEXT

After euthanasia, many families feel unsure about what happens next. This is completely normal.

Aftercare options often include:

- Private cremation with ashes returned
- Companion cremation without the return of the ashes
- Burial where permitted

Your veterinary team or service provider will guide you through these options gently and clearly.

Grief does not follow a straight path. You may feel relief, sadness, numbness, or all of these at once. Give yourself permission to feel whatever arises.

Some families find comfort in creating a small ritual or memorial. This may include lighting a candle, planting a tree, creating a photo album, or simply taking time to remember.

Support is available. Speaking with friends, family, or pet loss support services can help ease the weight of grief.

### **Gentle reminder**

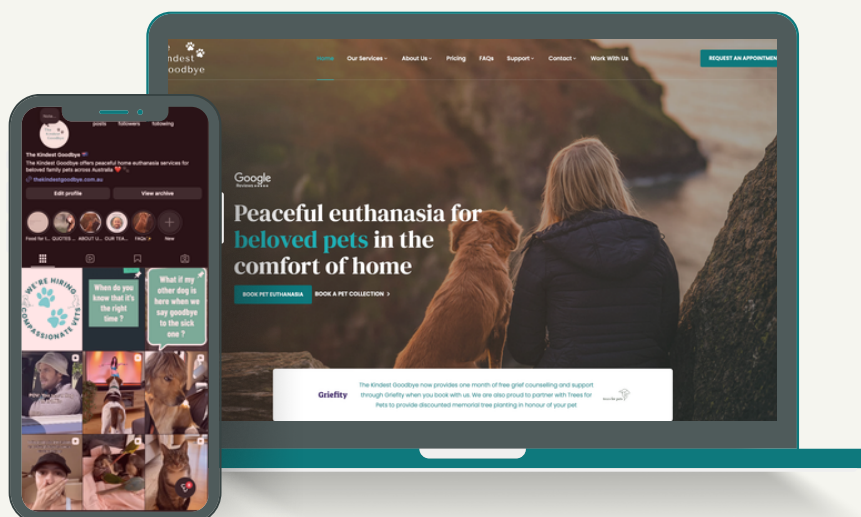
*Grief is the price we pay for love, and love is always worth it.*

## NEED MORE INSIGHT?

Visit our website for further guidance and compassionate resources.

Stay connected with us on social media for ongoing support and reflections.

Free grief support through Griefity and memorial trees via Trees for Pets are always available.



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