

Embracing the Emergency Room: Preparing for the Unexpected

One of the most common things we hear is “I don’t want to end up in an emergency situation”. As understandable as this is, the fact of the matter is that emergencies happen, no matter how well you plan. Emergency clinics are a vital part of getting care in unexpected situations. Ending up at the ER is not something you got wrong, but the stress of forming a plan on the fly can take away from your ability to truly be present with your pet in their final moments. A little preparation can clear away the logistics, so you have the space to truly engage in this experience and shower your pet with as much love and comfort as possible. Take what feels right and leave the rest.

Preparation and Planning

Emergency Room Information

Name, Address, Phone Number and Hours

Backup Emergency Room Information

Name, Address, Phone Number and Hours

Transportation

How are you getting your pet to the emergency room?

Phone Tree (If Applicable)

Who needs to be notified? Who is making the calls?

Aftercare Options

Are you electing home burial? Private cremation? Communal cremation?

Childcare Plan (If Applicable)

Do you need to arrange childcare? Are they coming with you? Are there activities for them you would like to bring?

Pain Management Plan

Do you have a plan from your primary vet with regards to pain management for your pet on the way to the emergency room?

After Plan

Is there something you want to do afterwards (go get a meal, take a walk, etc.)? Will you be able to drive yourself home, or could you use support?

For Your Pet

Favorite Treats

Food is Love. Treats can bring so much joy to you and your pet. Now is the time to embrace every form of comfort.

Favorite Toy

Do they have a toy/item that would bring them comfort?

Favorite Bed/Blanket

This can be to provide comfort to both your pet and yourself during the euthanasia (e.g. being on the floor), or to be sent with your pet for cremation afterwards.

Familiar Item/Smell

This can be useful to anyone, but especially in the case where an important family member can not be present

Grooming Tool (If enjoyed)

Some animals really enjoy being brushed, scratched, massaged. Bringing their favorite tool allows you to continue that comfort and bonding even in the ER.

For Your Family

Personal Reflections

Are there any readings, poems, letters, etc that may bring you peace in these last moments together?

Music/Sound

Is there any music or nature sounds you’d like to play during your time at the ER or during the euthanasia?

Snacks and drinks

Hospital vending options can be limited. A comforting snack or drink can go a long, especially if there is a wait.

Phone charger

A phone charger allows you to stay connected and helps provide a, sometimes necessary, distraction in case of an extended visit.

Memory Products

Are there any memory products you’d like? (i.e Paw Print, nose print, hair clippings, etc). Pack the supplies you need.

