



At the Wauwatosa Veterinary Clinic, we understand that pets are family, and our staff is here to provide compassionate care and guidance during the final days of your pet's life and throughout your journey with grief.



**For more information or support,
visit our website or contact:**

Kerry Malak, PGRS-C
Certified Pet Loss Counselor
KerryM@WauwatosaVet.com
414-475-5155

**You're also invited to join our
Facebook support group exclusively
for Wauwatosa Veterinary Clinic
clients:**
**[Wauwatosa Veterinary Clinic Hospice
& Pet Loss Support](#)**



2600 Wauwatosa Ave.
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
www.WauwatosaVet.com



SAYING GOODBYE

**Coping with the Loss of
an Animal Loved One**



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Helpful Resources:

Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement

www.aplb.org

Free, online pet loss support groups.

University of Michigan Pet Loss Hotline

517-432-2696

Pet Loss Support Page

www.pet-loss.net

Grief Healing

www.griefhealing.com

Recommended Books:

Pet Parents: A Journey Through Unconditional

Love And Grief - *Coleen Ellis*

The Loss of a Pet - *Wallace Sife*

So Easy to Love, So Hard to Lose - *Laurie Kaplan*

Goodbye, Friend - *Gary Kowalski*

Going Home - *Jon Katz*

***Find more pet loss information and
resources on our website at:
www.WauwatosaVet.com***



Tips for Coping with Pet Loss

- Reach out to others and talk about your loss with friends, family or a support group.
- Keep a journal to express your feelings and preserve some of your favorite memories of your pet.
- Put together a photo album of your pet to remind you of the life they lived and all of the joy and adventures they experienced.
- Try to get enough sleep, food and exercise. Grief is very stressful and can be hard on the immune system. Remember, your pet would want you to take care of yourself even in their absence.
- Plan a memorial of some kind to honor your animal loved one. It can be as simple as lighting a candle and playing a favorite song, saying a prayer or reading a poem. You may also want to ask friends or family to share some of their favorite memories of your pet.
- Make a donation in your pet's name to a favorite charity or drop off some supplies to a local shelter or rescue group to honor your pet's legacy.
- Write a letter to your pet to tell them some of the things you didn't get a chance to say, or to let them know how much you miss them and love them.
- Change some of your daily routines to help avoid things that trigger your strongest grief. Try taking a different walking route around your neighborhood, rearrange your schedule, move some furniture, or even try coming into your house through a different door.
- If you have other pets at home, spend some extra time with them doing things you both love. Animals often grieve too, and they may need more attention and love at first to help them cope.
- Be patient with yourself and understand that grief has many stages and each person must deal with loss in their own way and time. There may be ups and downs, but eventually, you will find healing.

Why is it so hard to say goodbye?

People are often surprised about the level of grief they experience after the loss of a pet. But for many of us, our pets are more than just animals – they are friends, family members and constant companions who have given us years of unconditional love and trust. Although pet loss is too often ignored or minimized in our society, it is very normal to mourn the passing of such a close friend. In some cases, people find that losing a beloved pet is as difficult, or even more so, than losing a person in their life because of this special bond.

Understanding “normal” grief

While each person deals with loss in their own way and at their own pace, most people experience very similar reactions during the early stages of grief. These can include:

- Crying
- Numbness / disbelief
- Feelings of guilt or regret
- Anger or frustration that your pet has died
- Difficulty sleeping
- Lack of appetite / emotional eating
- Excess worry about remaining pets

Grief can feel overwhelming at first, but with time the pain begins to subside as joyful memories of our animal loved ones begin to replace the sadness surrounding their death.



If you do not begin to see some signs of improvement after a while, or your grief begins to interfere with daily living, please seek the help of a physician or counselor. Grief can often compound existing issues such as depression or anxiety or may bring up past traumas or losses. It's okay to reach out for extra help when you need it.