How is Euthanasia actually carried out – and what happens? Once euthanasia has been decided upon and before we carry this out, you will always be asked to sign a consent form as this allows us time to discuss the procedure. We discuss issues such as whether you would like to be present or not during the euthanasia and not least what to expect from the actual procedure (only if you would like this information more in-depth).

We will also discuss (and recommend) which method may suit your pet and your wishes best as there are several ways this can be carried out, depending on your wishes, your pet’s personality and his/her possible illness. We will, of course, advise you from our vast experience in what will make it the most peaceful and gentle - for both your pet and you.

Almost all the many hundreds of home euthanasias over the years we have conducted have been extremely gentle, quick and un-stressful to all parties involved. We are proud to say we always seem to almost surprise pet owners in just how “nice” the whole experience was – even given the sadness of the circumstances.

We usually advise – after careful individual consideration – on one of the options listed below for an as gentle and peaceful euthanasia as possible:

**CATS:**
Cats are very individual and as such the circumstances surrounding their need for euthanasia are always taken into consideration when deciding on how to put them to sleep in the gentlest way - often without moving them at all from the position they are comfortably in – on a bed, on your lap, in the basket or on the sofa - at home. Cats will usually only need one injection (pain-free) when we do it this way.

The injection - containing sleeping medication - works initially as a sedation and is best given painlessly in the side (depending on your cat’s circumstances and illness) or can be given as a quick intravenous injection in the front leg though we do not usually recommend this method for cats. Usually the side injection starts working immediately but sometimes with a very ill animal it will work more slowly as a sedation first gradually making your cat sleepy.

The single most important issue with cats is to give the single injection without your cat hardly noticing being given an injection. This is a very special skill and something we are very experienced in.

**DOGS:**
1. **With sedation first (dogs only):** For a very gentle and slow induction suited for very nervous, anxious or aggressive dogs or animals in too much pain - or just because it is simply a more gentle and “nice” experience for your pet - and you.
The sedation is a painless injection in the back of the neck much like giving a vaccination and it will make your pet sleepy – on average within 5-15 minutes - in which time you can sit holding and stroking your pet. After your pet is fully asleep we give the actual euthanizing intravenous injection as described below - which can be a bit harder to give as the muscles and veins relax with the sedation but importantly your pet is sleeping through this.

2. Without sedation: This is an extremely quick method and also usually quite peaceful and painless way to end your pet’s struggles. It is best suited for very calm, placid animals that don’t mind being given treatment (I/v injection) by a vet (not many animals usually fall in this category – but far more will be eligible for this when they are treated at home).

Procedure: We will start by shaving a small patch of fur on your pet’s front leg to enable an injection in the vein (I/v injection). In some very sick, dehydrated or old animals the vein may have collapsed and therefore be difficult to locate so the injection may be given painlessly in another area of the body such as a back leg (dogs) or in the side (cats).

To enable the delicate i/v injection in the leg, the nurse will hold the leg to raise the vein for the vet, while you can hold his/her head and talk to your pet so he/she hardly notices the injection with the overdose of a sleeping medication (barbiturate) being given.

Already within 5-10 seconds you pet will feel very sleepy and lie down- if not already. The breathing and heartbeat stops almost immediately and once your pet has lost consciousness it is natural to maybe take a few deep breaths, or even a few gasps before relaxing completely.

Occasionally a brief twitch or small muscle spasm can occur after death - for up to 20 minutes even. This is perfectly normal and should not be taken as “a sign of life”. As the body relaxes so does the bladder (and sometimes bowel) which we are fully prepared for and will take care of. Your pet’s eyes will remain open but the vet will then always check for a heartbeat, reflexes and pulses before putting your pet into sleeping position - as that is exactly how your pet will look once deceased - as if he or she is just resting peacefully.

Remember the most important thing: Your pet will hardly feel this last injection and just feel overwhelmed with tiredness - in his/her favourite spot at home with his/her favourite people surrounding him/her. Isn’t that a truly lovely and dignified way to end a good life?
For our devoted in-home euthanasia line - or whether to just have an informal chat about your worries with our caring staff or to make an actual final arrangement - please call:

MOBILE: 07717 858885