

Ask the Vet

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Dr. Sara Fletcher is a Greensboro native & graduate of Page High School. She graduated from NCSU in 1999 and NCSU-CVM in 2003. She lives in Lindley Park with her two dogs: Rooty, a 9 year old greyhound, and Buster Brown, a 1 year old pit bull- and two young cats: Tulip and VyaLynn.

Animal Hospice - Philosophies and End of Life Care

What Does Animal Hospice Mean?

Philosophies of hospice and end-of-life care for animals are similar to that of human hospice care. Pet hospice is guided by the premise that our friends will inevitably enter life's final phases, and once they do, they deserve a care plan focused on providing them with good quality of life for as long as possible. Hospice and palliative care are typically combined in end-of-life care for animals to provide a supportive, compassionate environment in which a family may achieve some mental or spiritual preparation for the death of their lovely little friend. Hospice care is about appropriate medical care, end-of-life support, and access to a caring community of professionals who are well equipped to respond to individual needs, human or animal, as they arise.

What Type of Services are Offered?

More specifically, palliative care is a kind of medical treatment that does not focus on curing disease. It focuses on maintaining comfort with doctor prescribed medications and or treatments to help patients achieve the best quality of life possible while they are with us. For example, incurable conditions that cause symptoms like nausea or vomiting are untreatable. However, nausea and vomiting are very treatable symptoms and most pets respond well to anti-nausea/vomiting medications; nausea is a terrible feeling and palliative care, by definition, is the attempt to prevent the patient from experiencing this discomfort.

What Do Lap of Love Veterinarians Do?

Generally speaking, we provide compassionate in-home end-of-life care for animals. We are dedicated to preserving the human animal bond and every single thing we do comes from respect for the love and joy shared between our clients and their animal companions. Our intention is to maintain dignity and quality of life. Even under the best of circumstances, losing a pet is a sad, difficult experience. End-of-life care veterinarians are trained to make a difficult time a little easier for everyone involved.

In-home hospice consultations cover every aspect of end-of-life care, including assessment, discussion and finally creating palliative care plans and beginning palliative treatments. When necessary, we train family members to give treatments in our absence, like subcutaneous fluids and/or injections. We assist owners in Quality

of Life Evaluation based on environmental, clinical, medical and prognostic indications. Navigating a realistic plan for care together is almost always a component. We don't make decisions for you; rather, we help you make decisions on your own.

When we have done all that we know how to do, when pain or suffering cannot be controlled or there is no quality of life for an animal, we will perform euthanasia in your home. Transportation to the crematorium is handled by the attending Lap of Love veterinarian, and depending on your very personal choice for the remains, we will return your pet's ashes to you or they will be scattered on a tree farm in Rockingham County. Our work doesn't end there; grief support is available and we have so many helpful resources to share. Sometimes we listen; it's hard to go through this alone and we empathize.

What Don't We Do?

Lap of Love doctors don't do routine veterinary care like rabies shots and heartworm tests, nor do we carry any preventative health care products like flea medicine. In addition, we are unable to perform any diagnostic services like blood work or perform x-rays.

N C Veterinary Practice Act.

A significant number of the people that reach out to me for help do so after learning their regular vet will not come to their home to euthanize their pet. Many of them feel angry about this; having been long time loyal clients, hearing that your trusted vet won't grant you a personal request during these precious last moments feels like a betrayal. This is never the case.

What people are surprised to learn is the legislation that governs all practicing veterinarians in our state, The North Carolina Veterinary Practice Act, requires vets to carry a special license to make house calls of any kind. The mobile license is separate from, and in addition to, all of our regular licenses. In order to become licensed as a mobile practitioner, a mobile service (vehicle and all) has to pass detailed inspection by the NCVMB, satisfactorily meet & maintain the specific requirements determined by the state, and must be obtained before a vet can make a single house call in compliance with the law.

Vets that work in hospitals rarely carry this extra license when they simply don't need it and it almost requires a dedicated vehicle. This might be the sole reason your request was declined; you have not been abandoned in your hour of need, so please know that you and your pet are cared about and your loyalty is appreciated by your trusted veterinarian.



PROVIDING END-OF-LIFE CARE WITH COMPASSION, DIGNITY AND LOVE.

CALL, EMAIL OR EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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