

Keeping Your Pet's Body

If you are keeping your pet's body after the doctor's visit, here is some information that you might find helpful...

The First 12 to 24 Hours

We don't expect any major changes to the body for the first 12 to 24 hours, except for the following:

- body fluid leakage – Due to all the muscle relaxation, there can be body fluid leakage at any time. Elimination of urine is most common, but diarrhea is possible, as well as airway fluid from the nose and mouth. **A disposable plastic-lined pad or washable towel should be placed directly under the lower-half of the body and perhaps the head, as well.** For longer control, you can place cotton (or a tampon) as a barrier inside the anus, genital openings, nose and/or mouth, if needed.
- rigor mortis – At some point the body's muscles will become stiff but the timing is variable. This can happen within the first hour or not for a few hours afterwards. The muscles will eventually relax, but they can take many hours or even days to become soft again. **We highly recommend positioning the body in a curled-up sleeping position immediately after the pet has passed, before rigor mortis occurs.**
- eyes remain open – People don't realize that the open position is the relaxed position. It actually takes effort and energy to keep our eyes closed. Eyes can be kept closed by placing a small amount of Vaseline petroleum jelly under the upper eyelid or a small amount of Super Glue on the edges of the eyelids before closing them.
- The tongue might protrude from the mouth from all the relaxation, as well. It can be replaced by gently opening the mouth and pushing it back in. A more permanent solution is to place Super Glue along the lip edges and seal them together.

Crematorium or Cemetery

If you plan to use a crematorium or cemetery, make sure to contact the facility ahead of time to make all necessary arrangements for pickup or delivery. Ask if they have preferences for how to store the body in the meantime.

Burial

If burying at home or elsewhere, be sure to:

- Check local laws about burial within county lines. Some counties recommend 100 feet from wells or waterways and 4 feet above the ground water table.
- Avoid low-lying areas that may be prone to flooding.
- Avoid utility lines such as water, gas and power.
- Consider purchasing a burial box or bag online, if desired.
- Dig or prepare the site ahead of time in order to deal with any unforeseen obstacles.
- **Create a space at least 4 feet deep to allow 3 feet of earth on top of the body.** We want to prevent wildlife from gaining access for obvious reasons including exposure to the euthanasia chemicals.

Longer Preservation

If you plan to hold the body more than 24 hours, such as for viewing by others, here are some other tips and suggestions:

- The coat can be cleaned with hydrogen peroxide or cool water, dried with a towel or blow-dryer and then brushed or combed.
- Odor control can be achieved with Febreze, baking soda or more professional products from www.ShivaShade.com
- The body should be wrapped in direct contact with something absorbent, then a layer of plastic, followed by a blanket for the outer layer. It looks nice to support the head with a rolled-up towel or pillow. To keep things cool, you can place a bag of ice underneath the body. Feel free to lay special items next to your pet, such as favorite toys, treats, flowers, pictures, cards or other mementos.

If you have any questions or need further help, feel free to contact us by phone at (415)-729-5435 or email at agentlerest@gmail.com.

