



Saying Goodbye to Your 4 Legged Friend

Making the decision to put your pet to sleep can be a difficult and sad time. The following post is designed to guide you through this difficult process and help address any questions you may have.

Part of being a horse owner is recognizing when it is the appropriate time to say goodbye. They rely on us to make these decisions for their welfare which occurs either during an emergency situation or over a prolonged time. During an emergency there is usually a time pressure to make a decision which can be stressful and decisions are often made under duress. The prolonged time decisions will usually involve a condition that is impacting your beloved animal's quality of life, such as a chronic disease, old age or chronic pain. In these cases, it may be difficult to rationalise putting them to sleep, as they often have both "good" and "bad" days. It is helpful to consider if your horse is having more good days than bad ones. As horses are prey animals, they are often stoic and will not always show obvious signs of pain. Some signs of pain and poor health to monitor include reduced appetite and weight loss, difficulty/unwillingness to move, and spending more time lying down.

If you are still unsure, one of our vets can perform a thorough examination of your horse, to assess and discuss their overall quality of life. Please be aware that we will never judge you for your decision to euthanise your horse. It is our duty to help guide you and we trust that you as the owner will know your animal the best and will make the best decision for their quality of life.

Once the decision is made to put your horse to rest, some logistics need to be considered. Firstly, you will need to decide what you want to do with your horse after the euthanasia is performed. The most common options include at home burial, body removal and cremation which we have all relevant contacts available for you upon request.

There are a few different options available and Elite Equine Vets offer two options to humanely euthanise your beloved horse. Euthanasia via an intravenous injection which is essentially an overdose of an anesthetic or euthanasia via a rifle - this is your choice as the owner. Regardless of which option you choose, we always sedate your horse to ensure the euthanasia is not stressful for you or your beloved horse.

Elite Equine Veterinarians

Ph: 0412 619 740

Email: vets@eliteequinevets.com.au

Both euthanasia methods can produce involuntary responses from your horse in the moments following. These can include muscle tremors, twitching, paddling and agonal gasping. These responses can vary and can occur due to increased age, physical or medical conditions your horse may have. Please be assured, your horse is not suffering at this time and your horse will be in the hands of our experienced staff members. However, if you do not wish to be present for this procedure, that is understandable and we can look after this for you.

Following the euthanasia, grief and sadness is to be expected. Some things that may make this easier include planning the euthanasia for a beautiful sunny day, spending quality time together prior to the appointment, feeding them their favorite treats and surrounding yourself with loved ones who share your love for your horses. There are also professionals available that you can speak to who specialize in grief associated with losing a pet. We can provide contact details for you upon request.

We also ask our clients to be considerate of our staff during these stressful and sad times. We understand that euthanasia is a difficult topic for owners, however it is also a difficult job for vets and a procedure that we want to perform optimally for you and your horse. Please treat all staff members with respect and kindness, we are here to help both you and your horse with the process of euthanasia.

