

The first hours after a pet dies

A short checklist for the calls and choices that may come before you are ready to make them.

The next practical steps

- [] **Pause before making decisions.** If circumstances allow, take a few minutes. You do not need to decide everything at once.
- [] **Call your veterinarian.** If your pet died at home, the clinic can explain local transport, storage, and aftercare options. An emergency clinic may help outside regular hours.
- [] **Ask what can wait.** Request a clear timeline for transport, cremation or burial decisions, payment, and the return of personal items.
- [] **Choose who should be present.** Children and other family members may want a goodbye. Give each person a choice when possible.
- [] **Save only what you want.** Ask before a collar, tag, blanket, paw print, fur clipping, or other item is removed or discarded.
- [] **Write down one contact.** Choose one person who can make calls, drive, bring food, or sit with you. A specific request is easier to answer.
- [] **Keep surviving pets' routines steady.** Maintain meals, walks, medication, and bedtime. Contact a veterinarian about persistent changes or promptly if a pet stops eating or drinking.

If you need to talk with someone

Pet-loss support lines and groups can provide a place to talk. Current options are listed at **bestieballad.com/pet-loss-resources.html**. If you may hurt yourself or someone else in the United States, call or text 988 or contact emergency services.

This handout offers general information, not veterinary, legal, or mental-health advice. Local rules and provider procedures vary.