




## Animal Hospital

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MEMBER HOSPITAL



# Coping with the Loss of Your Pet

## **Grief:**

Profound sadness and grief resulting from the death of your pet are normal feelings. The loss of your beloved companion animal can be as emotional as the loss of a family member. The grieving process includes accepting the reality of your loss, acknowledging the loss and accompanying feelings are painful, and adjusting to your new life that no longer includes your pet.



## **Denial:**

Grief is often met with denial. This anger can be directed toward people you normally love and respect, including your family and veterinarian. Without meaning to hurt anyone, you may find yourself blaming yourself and others for not recognizing the illness earlier or for being careless and allowing the pet to be injured.

## **Guilt:**

Guilt and depression can also be stages of grief. This is when you usually feel the greatest sense of loss. Tears, knots in your stomach and lack of energy are normal. Day-to-day tasks may seem impossible. You may even ask yourself if you can go on without your pet. Special assistance may be needed from a psychologist, physician, veterinarian or the clergy to overcome your grief.



## **Accepting and Memories:**

Once you and your family understand your sad feelings and accept your pet's death, these feelings can be replaced with fond memories. Grieving is a personal process and may take longer for some people than others.

## **Another Pet?**

After a beloved pet has died, some people may feel they would never want another pet. A new pet may help others get over the loss more quickly. Just as grief is a personal experience, the decision of when, if ever, to get a new pet is a personal one. It is a decision the entire family must share. Although you can never replace the pet you lost, you can get another one to share your life and with time you will find that they will help fill the hole left by your loss.



## **Talk with Someone Who Understands:**

We understand that you are going through a difficult time. Please feel free to call or email us if you need someone to talk to about the loss of your pet. Ask to talk to your doctor or one of our other pet loss support members. We can also refer you to support groups with people who completely understand what you are going through. Find the links on our website; see our Memorial section on the Photos, Memorial Page. We would love to post a memorial to honor your pet's memory.