

When your rabbit passes away...



If your rabbit dies at home...

Call your veterinarian. They may suggest a post-mortem exam (necropsy), or you may request one if your rabbit's passing was sudden or unexpected. There is usually a fee for this. Some people choose to have this done for closure and answers, and some veterinarians appreciate the opportunity to learn what happened in effort to help other rabbits in the future. If there is a possibility you will want a necropsy done, you must refrigerate, and not freeze, your rabbit's body in the meantime.

If you decide to euthanize...

Each office may have different protocols. While no one likes to talk about this subject, it may be a good idea to ask how your veterinarian does things. Hopefully it includes a pre-anesthetic, which is a tranquilizer and will help your pet relax and relieve all of their pain. This is then followed with the euthanasia solution, administered when both pet and owner are ready.

You will be asked if you want to be present for this procedure. It is a consolation for many to be present as their rabbit crosses the Rainbow Bridge. Others prefer to say goodbye and then allow the veterinarian to perform the procedure without them. It is a very personal decision. You may be offered the opportunity to spend time with your rabbit's body. If so, it's your choice. Do what feels right in the moment.

Most veterinarians not only allow but encourage owners to spend some time with their rabbit after they pass away. Not everyone chooses to do this, but it can be comforting for some. Euthanasia is indeed very sad, but it is a privilege to assist a beloved pet with their suffering in this way. It is the final gift of love.

If your rabbit leaves behind a partner...

If your rabbit leaves behind a partner, you may consider placing your deceased bunny with them to acclimate. Some people feel this is beneficial. Others feel that the surviving rabbit likely knew before you even did that something was wrong, and has already said goodbye. It is not always practical to do this. Do not worry if you cannot. Most surviving partner rabbits do just fine after the death of a mate, but keep a very close eye on their eating and pooping habits just to be sure.

After...

There are three options to deal with your pet's body after he/she passes. Some people choose to take their rabbit's body home and bury him/her.

Most people choose to have their rabbit cremated. With private or individual cremation, you will receive your pet's ashes back. With communal cremation you will not. Private cremation costs about double what communal cremation costs, so you may wish to discuss this with your vet beforehand. Talk to your veterinarian about options and fees now so you have a plan in place, rather than being faced with tough decisions while in distress.

You may ask your vet to provide you with a patch of shaved fur to memorialize your rabbit. You may also create a paw imprint with a kit that you bring. Your vet's staff can probably help you.