



Remembering Your Pet

Gentle keepsake and memorial ideas, and where to turn for support in the UK

PETSLIKEMINE

QUALITY OF LIFE & END-OF-LIFE

PET NAME

A quiet thought visits a lot of owners: I think I might want to keep something. And often, in the same breath, a little shame, as if it were morbid to think of it while they are still here. It is not morbid, and it is not disloyal. It is one of the most human parts of grieving well. This is a small menu, not a checklist: take only what speaks to you, and feel no pressure to take any of it.

SMALL TOKENS SOME OWNERS KEEP

- A paw print, pressed in ink onto card or set into soft clay
- A nose print, individual to your pet like a fingerprint
- The everyday things: the collar and name tag, a single whisker, a paper rubbing of the tag
- A small clipping of fur, kept in a little bottle or a locket
- A last quiet photograph, if it feels right (a hand on a sleeping flank, the family gathered close)
- Planting something, or marking the loss together as a family, in your own time

THE ONE PIECE OF TIMING WORTH KNOWING EARLY

A paw print needs your pet's body to take it, so it has to be done at the time and cannot be taken once a pet has been cremated. A clipping of fur is more forgiving and can usually still be taken afterwards, even at the crematorium. So if a paw print is something you think you might want, even if you are unsure, a quiet word in advance keeps the choice yours. Practices vary: some offer keepsakes freely, some make a small charge, and you can always bring your own print kit.

IT IS ALSO COMPLETELY FINE TO WANT NOTHING

Some owners want every keepsake; some want one small thing; some want none at all, and not one of these says anything about how much they loved their pet. The bond does not live in a clay impression or a lock of fur. It lives in you, in the years and the ordinary mornings and the particular weight of them against your leg. There is no deadline on deciding, and a print or a curl of fur can become the heart of a memory box later, only when you are ready.

PET-LOSS SUPPORT IN THE UK

- Blue Cross Pet Bereavement Support Service: 0800 096 6606, every day 8.30am to 8.30pm (before a loss as well as after)
- The Ralph Site: free written resources, online memorials and a supportive community
- Samaritans: 116 123, free, day or night, if the weight ever feels too much to carry
- Cats Protection Paws to Listen: 0800 024 94 94, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- Dogs Trust: written bereavement guidance and a memory wall

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Whether you keep a clay print on the windowsill, a curl of fur in a drawer, a worn collar on its hook, or simply the memory of them held close, each choice is a loving one. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

A MENU, NOT A CHECKLIST; THE BOND DOES NOT LIVE IN AN OBJECT