

"Our Angel"
in Heaven
Madison Bing

To Mother
Love
Madison Bing

Letti Lee
Teacher of
Math and Science

TEACHING TARGET

VETERINARY TEAMS CAN HELP CLIENTS WHO ARE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF A PET BY SHARING THESE IDEAS TO HONOR THEIR BELOVED PET.

Ways to Honor Deceased Pets

Dani McVety, DVM

Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice
Tampa, Florida



Veterinary teams can help clients honor their deceased pets in many different ways (eg, clay or ink paw prints, fur clippings, memorial donations). Outside the practice walls, countless new ideas can help families memorialize their pets in unique ways—some that may surprise you!

Top 5 Ways to Honor Deceased Pets

- Write a Gratitude List
- Craft a Memory
- Create a Memorial Table
- Pay It Forward
- Attend a Ceremony

Memory Lane

- Art in Ashes. artinashes.com
- Budsies: Making a Huggable World. budsies.com/petsies
- Cremation Solutions. cremationsolutions.com/information/cremation-jewelry-information/crystals-made-from-the-ashes-of-people-and-pets
- Felted Pet Hair Beads. instructables.com/id/Felted-Pet-Hair-Beads
- Floating Lantern Memorials. floatinglanternmemorials.com
- Paw-print jewelry. etsy.com/ca/search?q=paw%20print%20jewelry
- Perpetua DNA Life Jewels. perpetuadnajewels.com
- The Pet Loss Center (for journey urns). thepetlosscenter.com
- ViaGen Pets. viagenpets.com
- Wearing the hair of the dog. ifitshipitshere.blogspot.com/2008/10/wearing-hair-of-dog-portraits-of-people.html

Resource

- *Pet Loss and Human Bereavement*. Kay WJ, Nieburg HA, Kutscher AH, Grey RM, Fodin CE, eds. Wiley-Blackwell; 1991.



Photo courtesy of Dani McVety, DVM

▲ **FIGURE 1** Pet ID tags made into a bracelet



Photo courtesy of Dani McVety, DVM

▲ **FIGURE 2** The author has already made a Petsie of Secco, still going strong at 10.

Here are 5 special ways veterinary team members can help clients honor their beloved pet.

1 Write a Gratitude List

Bucket lists for pets are a list of all the experiences an owner wants for his or her pet. After a pet has died, suggest the owner make a list of all the things she *did* with her pet—experiences they enjoyed together, things that made her smile, and memories she is thankful for. The list can be very simple; for example, the time her dog knocked over her cup of coffee, and when she was cleaning up the mess, she found a long-lost tennis ball under the sofa that she and her dog played with for the next hour.

2 Craft a Memory

Pets can be kept close at all times in many ways (see **Memory Lane**):

- Pet ID tags made into a bracelet (see **Figure 1**), necklace, or tattoo
- A paw print or nose print made into a pendant
- A keepsake (eg, necklace, sweater, bracelet, belt) made from the pet's fur
- A DNA helix necklace
- A lifelike, custom-stuffed animal (see **Figure 2**)
- Ashes incorporated into an urn, jewelry, tattoo, or painting
- Cloning him or her—yes, it can be done

Veterinary professionals can give grieving families no greater gift than the ability to honor their beloved pets.



▲ **FIGURE 3** A memorial shelf containing cats' ashes and framed paw prints



▲ **FIGURE 4** A framed collection of a pet's mementos, including the pet's food bowl

Photo courtesy of Dani McVety, DVM

3 Create a Memorial Table

Dedicating a space (eg, small table, bookshelf) to display a pet's favorite toys, food bowls, photos, and mementos can help keep the pet's memory alive, with or without the pet's ashes. (See **Figures 3 & 4.**) For example, after a client's dog, Jacob, was peacefully euthanized, the client ceremonially washed Jacob's food bowls and placed them next to his clay paw print, puppy photo, and collar. A special journey urn that looks like a book, called *The Life We Shared*, was added later. (See **Memory Lane.**)

4 Pay It Forward

Not everyone who loses a pet is ready for another one right away, but paying it forward and helping other animals in need is another way to honor a deceased pet. Fostering another animal, donating to a cause in memory of a pet (eg, a college of veterinary medicine, animal shelter, humane society), or starting a cancer walk can help owners give tribute to their pet and stay involved in the pet-loving community.

5 Attend a Ceremony

Support groups in which owners can gather with others experiencing similar grief can be helpful. The local human hospice is perhaps the best place to begin; even if they do not hold their own pet-loss groups, they likely will know of such gatherings. Support groups for those who have lost loved ones may be just as beneficial because, after all, grief is grief, regardless of its cause.

Pet Loss Resources for Children

When asked about the subject of children and death, a child psychologist once said, “If you want to raise an angry child, keep him [or] her ill-informed.” In other words, honesty is always the best policy. How a child responds will always be a reflection of his or her strength of bond with the pet, mental status, age, gender, and development stage.

In the author’s experience, children fall into 3 major age groups with different perspectives on pet loss. Here are resources for each age group:

AGES 0 TO 6

Young children are typically most upset by the reaction of their parents or guardians. Stay away from euphemisms like *He was sick* or *She is asleep*, which may elicit fear when the words are used with their normal meaning. Direct, clear communication is best (eg, *Mommy is sad because Stoli died*). Resources for young children help them understand the meaning of death and that their pet will not be coming back.

- *I’ll Always Love You*, by Hans Wilhelm (Crown Publishers, Inc; 1985), is a tender book that will touch any family member, especially children who have grown up with their pets and then have to say goodbye.

AGES 6 TO 14

School-age children are curious, intelligent, and resilient. Losing a pet is typically their first experience with death and can be very difficult, so it is a good time to model dealing with intense feelings appropriately. Children in this age group should not be shielded from the experience. Resources help them understand and manage grief.

- *When a Pet Dies*, by Fred Rogers (Family Communications, Inc; 1988), is an excellent book that is both direct and gentle and encourages children to share their feelings of loss.



- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, by Judith Viorst (Aladdin Paperbacks; 1971), will start family conversations about the good times with their pet. When a little boy’s cat dies, the family plans a funeral and asks the boy to recall 10 good things about his cat, which lifts his spirits.

AGES 14 TO 21

Teenagers and young adults can be the most challenging to work with because they frequently have a hard time accepting a decision to euthanize a pet. Discuss the situation, ask open-ended questions, and seek feedback to ensure they understand why and how a medical decision is being made. Resources for this age group help explain that death can be a peaceful, loving, and calm experience.

- *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*, by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen (Bantam Books; 1983), may seem slightly juvenile, but the book covers dying in different living things (ie, plants, animals, people) and explains how birth and death are both a part of life.
- *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, and Their Own Families*, by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (MacMillan Publishing; 1977), is one of the best resources available for older teenagers and adults who need a more cerebral approach to understanding the loss of a family member.

Remember that support groups may help some people but may be too depressing for others. Events such as candle-lighting or floating lantern ceremonies honor pets in a special, meaningful way. If none exist in your area, it may be time to start your own ceremony.

Conclusion

Every owner, whether an adult or child, experiences loss and grieves differently, and care should be taken to let each person honor his or her lost pet in his or her own way. (See **Pet Loss Resources for Children.**) Veterinary professionals can give grieving families no greater gift than the ability to honor their beloved pets. Thankfully, the choices are many. ■



TEAM TAKEAWAYS

Veterinarians: Honesty is always the best policy with clients grieving about their pet, especially with children, so communicate clearly and directly and avoid euphemisms about the patient's death.

Nursing Team: Support groups and special ceremonies are often beneficial for grieving clients; if none exist in the practice area, consider starting a new group, recognizing that some people find them too depressing.

Client Care Team: With input from the practice team, put together a brochure for clients that lists the different ways (eg, jewelry, framed memorials, books) they can keep their pet's memory alive.

NexGard® (afoxolaner) Chewables

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Description:

NexGard® (afoxolaner) is available in four sizes of beef-flavored, soft chewables for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Each chewable is formulated to provide a minimum afoxolaner dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg). Afoxolaner has the chemical composition 1-Naphthalenecarboxamide, 4-[5-[3-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl]-4,5-dihydro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-3-isoxazolyl]-N-[2-oxo-2-[(2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)amino]ethyl].

Indications:

NexGard kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of Black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), and Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) infestations in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, weighing 4 pounds of body weight or greater, for one month.

Dosage and Administration:

NexGard is given orally once a month, at the minimum dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg).

Dosing Schedule:

Body Weight	Afoxolaner Per Chewable (mg)	Chewables Administered
4.0 to 10.0 lbs.	11.3	One
10.1 to 24.0 lbs.	28.3	One
24.1 to 60.0 lbs.	68	One
60.1 to 121.0 lbs.	136	One
Over 121.0 lbs.	Administer the appropriate combination of chewables	

NexGard can be administered with or without food. Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed for a few minutes to ensure that part of the dose is not lost or refused. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost or if vomiting occurs within two hours of administration, redose with another full dose. If a dose is missed, administer NexGard and resume a monthly dosing schedule.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year. In areas where fleas are common year-round, monthly treatment with NexGard should continue the entire year without interruption.

To minimize the likelihood of flea reinfestation, it is important to treat all animals within a household with an approved flea control product.

Tick Treatment and Control:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year (see **Effectiveness**).

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications for the use of NexGard.

Warnings:

Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental ingestion, contact a physician immediately.

Precautions:

The safe use of NexGard in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures (see **Adverse Reactions**).

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 333 households and 615 treated dogs (415 administered afoxolaner; 200 administered active control), no serious adverse reactions were observed with NexGard.

Over the 90-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. The most frequent reactions reported at an incidence of > 1% within any of the three months of observations are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction was vomiting. The occurrence of vomiting was generally self-limiting and of short duration and tended to decrease with subsequent doses in both groups. Five treated dogs experienced anorexia during the study, and two of those dogs experienced anorexia with the first dose but not subsequent doses.

Table 1: Dogs With Adverse Reactions.

	Treatment Group			
	Afoxolaner		Oral active control	
	N ¹	% (n=415)	N ²	% (n=200)
Vomiting (with and without blood)	17	4.1	25	12.5
Dry/Flaky Skin	13	3.1	2	1.0
Diarrhea (with and without blood)	13	3.1	7	3.5
Lethargy	7	1.7	4	2.0
Anorexia	5	1.2	9	4.5

¹Number of dogs in the afoxolaner treatment group with the identified abnormality.

²Number of dogs in the control group with the identified abnormality.

In the US field study, one dog with a history of seizures experienced a seizure on the same day after receiving the first dose and on the same day after receiving the second dose of NexGard. This dog experienced a third seizure one week after receiving the third dose. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. Another dog with a history of seizures had a seizure 19 days after the third dose of NexGard. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. A third dog with a history of seizures received NexGard and experienced no seizures throughout the study.

To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the MSDS, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251 or www.merial.com/NexGard. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>.

Mode of Action:

Afoxolaner is a member of the isoxazoline family, shown to bind at a binding site to inhibit insect and acarine ligand-gated chloride channels, in particular those gated by the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), thereby blocking pre- and post-synaptic transfer of chloride ions across cell membranes. Prolonged afoxolaner-induced hyperexcitation results in uncontrolled activity of the central nervous system and death of insects and acarines. The selective toxicity of afoxolaner between insects and acarines and mammals may be inferred by the differential sensitivity of the insects and acarines' GABA receptors versus mammalian GABA receptors.

Effectiveness:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard began to kill fleas four hours after initial administration and demonstrated >99% effectiveness at eight hours. In a separate well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard demonstrated 100% effectiveness against adult fleas 24 hours post-infestation for 35 days, and was ≥ 93% effective at 12 hours post-infestation through Day 21, and on Day 35. On Day 28, NexGard was 81.1% effective 12 hours post-infestation. Dogs in both the treated and control groups that were infested with fleas on Day -1 generated flea eggs at 12- and 24-hours post-treatment (0-11 eggs and 1-17 eggs in the NexGard treated dogs, and 4-90 eggs and 0-118 eggs in the control dogs, at 12- and 24-hours, respectively). At subsequent evaluations post-infestation, fleas from dogs in the treated group were essentially unable to produce any eggs (0-1 eggs) while fleas from dogs in the control group continued to produce eggs (1-141 eggs).

In a 90-day US field study conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, the effectiveness of NexGard against fleas on the Day 30, 60 and 90 visits compared with baseline was 98.0%, 99.7%, and 99.9%, respectively. Collectively, the data from the three studies (two laboratory and one field) demonstrate that NexGard kills fleas before they can lay eggs, thus preventing subsequent flea infestations after the start of treatment of existing flea infestations.

In well-controlled laboratory studies, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Dermacentor variabilis*, >94% effectiveness against *Ixodes scapularis*, and >33% effectiveness against *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*, 40 hours post-infestation for 30 days. At 72 hours post-infestation, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Amblyomma americanum* for 30 days.

Animal Safety:

In a margin of safety study, NexGard was administered orally to 8 to 9-week-old Beagle puppies at 1, 3, and 5 times the maximum exposure dose (6.3 mg/kg) for three treatments every 28 days, followed by three treatments every 14 days, for a total of six treatments. Dogs in the control group were sham-dosed. There were no clinically-relevant effects related to treatment on physical examination, body weight, food consumption, clinical pathology (hematology, clinical chemistries, or coagulation tests), gross pathology, histopathology or organ weights. Vomiting occurred throughout the study, with a similar incidence in the treated and control groups, including one dog in the 5x group that vomited four hours after treatment. In a well-controlled field study, NexGard was used concomitantly with other medications, such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antibiotics (including topicals), steroids, NSAIDs, anesthetics, and antihistamines. No adverse reactions were observed from the concomitant use of NexGard with other medications.

Storage Information:

Store at or below 30°C (86°F) with excursions permitted up to 40°C (104°F).

How Supplied:

NexGard is available in four sizes of beef-flavored soft chewables: 11.3, 28.3, 68 or 136 mg afoxolaner. Each chewable size is available in color-coded packages of 1, 3 or 6 beef-flavored chewables.

NADA 141-406, Approved by FDA

Marketed by: Frontline Vet Labs™, a Division of Merial, Inc.

Duluth, GA 30096-4640 USA

Made in Brazil.

©NexGard is a registered trademark, and ™FRONTLINE VET LABS

is a trademark, of Merial. ©2015 Merial. All rights reserved.

1050-4483-03

Rev. 1/2015

FRONTLINE VET LABS
A Division of Merial, Inc.