

# Helping your pet cope with loss



The loss of a family member, whether it is another pet or a person in the household, can be an extremely difficult and emotional time for you, but it can also be very difficult for your pet. Your pet might not only be grieving the loss of their companion, but also detect your grief and want to provide comfort to you too.



## How do you know if your pet is grieving?

Pets don't always show external signs of grief, but the following are some signs to look out for:

- Reduced appetite
- Vocalisation (crying, whining)
- Pacing and 'searching' behaviour
- Disrupted sleep
- Increased attention seeking behaviour
- Sad demeanour and reduced enthusiasm for activities (walks, food time)

### Remember...

Time is the best healer. Be patient with your pet and understand that they, like you, will take time to cope with the loss of a loved one.



## How to help your pet to deal with a bereavement.

- ✔ Try to keep routines as normal as possible and changes in their environment minimal.
- ✔ Provide comfort and attention if your pet requests it.
- ✔ Enjoy positive time together -for cats this can be playing or stroking and fuss, for dogs this could be going on a walk.
- ✔ Speak to your vet if your pet isn't eating for 2 or more days or has a sustained period of reduced appetite. This is particularly important for cats as they can experience liver problems if they don't eat.
- ✔ Utilise behavioural supports such as calming pheromone products or nutraceuticals.
- ✔ If the bereavement is the loss of another pet, don't be tempted to rush into getting a new pet to replace the companionship, because this is another change for your pet to adjust to and can result in even more stress and anxiety.
- ✔ It is recommended to wait a few months before getting a new pet if you decide to do so.

# Support behavioural balance



## More support...

- The cat's protection offers Paws to listen  
[www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/grief/advice](http://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/grief/advice)
- The Blue Cross has a pet bereavement support service  
[www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-and-pet-loss](http://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-and-pet-loss)

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of your management strategy.

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or speak to your vet