

SAYING GOODBYE TO YOUR GREYHOUND

Every pet owner will, at some point, face one of the most difficult parts of the journey, knowing when it may be time to say goodbye.

For many people, this is not something they have experienced before. While it is often a difficult and emotional topic to discuss, it is one that deserves care, preparation, and compassion, because our dogs deserve nothing less.

At GAP, we are often asked, 'How will I know when it's time?' and 'What is the kindest way to say goodbye?' These are deeply personal questions, and there is no single right answer. However, you do not have to navigate this alone. This guide is here to help support you through this tough time with understanding and care.

Knowing when it may be time

If we are fortunate, we are given time to make this decision thoughtfully before our greyhound is in significant discomfort. While this is not always possible, having that time can allow for a calmer and more compassionate goodbye.

There is rarely a single moment that clearly signals it is time. More often, it is a gradual process of noticing change. You may see your greyhound slowing down, becoming less interested in food, walks, or interaction, or showing signs of discomfort, confusion, or withdrawal.

Many pet owners find comfort in the thought that it is kinder to say goodbye a little too early than a moment too late. We should aim to avoid their final day being their hardest.

Choosing to say goodbye before a crisis allows your greyhound to pass peacefully, without fear, distress, or emergency intervention. It also gives you the opportunity to create a calm, loving environment for their final moments.

Some helpful questions to reflect on include:

- Are they having more difficult days than good ones?
- Are they still enjoying the things that once made them happy?
- Are they comfortable with everyday activities such as walking, eating, or toileting?

Your veterinarian plays an important role in this process and can help you assess your greyhound's comfort, mobility, and overall wellbeing, offering guidance with experience and compassion.



Planning a home goodbye

If you have arranged for a veterinarian to visit your home, a little preparation can help create a peaceful and meaningful experience.

- **Choose a calm, unhurried time.** Select a time when you are not rushed and when those who wish to be present can be there. Many families prefer to set aside part or all of the day to spend together.
- **Create a familiar, comfortable space.** Choose your greyhound's favourite resting place, whether that is their bed, a quiet corner, or a sunny spot. Keeping the environment calm and familiar can help them feel secure. Turn off phones, have tissues nearby, and allow the day to feel as gentle as possible.
- **A special final moment.** Some families choose to offer their greyhound a favourite meal or treat such as roast chicken, ice cream, or another special food. Your vet can advise on what is appropriate, including timing if sedation is involved.
- **Consider other pets.** If you have other animals, think about whether their presence would be calming or disruptive. Some pets may find comfort in being nearby, while others may be better in a separate space. In some cases, seeing their companion afterwards can also help them understand what has happened.
- **Including children.** Children may respond in different ways depending on their age and understanding. Some may wish to be present, while others may prefer not to. A meaningful alternative can be helping create a farewell letter, drawing, or choosing a small keepsake to be placed with or kept in memory of the greyhound.
- **Creating final memories.** Some families find comfort in planning gentle "bucket list" moments in the days leading up to saying goodbye. These do not need to be elaborate – simple, familiar joys are often the most meaningful, such as:
 - A short trip to the beach or park
 - A favourite takeaway treat
 - Time spent resting in the sun together
 - A calm walk in a favourite place.

If you feel able, taking photos during these moments can become a treasured way to remember them later.



When a home visit isn't possible

Not everyone is able to arrange a home visit, and that is completely okay. A clinic-based goodbye can still be calm, respectful, and filled with love.

- **Stay with them if you can.** Your presence provides comfort and reassurance. Your voice, scent, and touch are deeply familiar and can help your greyhound feel safe. If you are unable to be present, a trusted friend or family member may be able to stay with them.
- **Request a calm environment.** Many clinics can offer quieter spaces or allow you to remain in your vehicle if that is more comfortable for your greyhound. Some veterinarians may also be able to carry out the procedure in the car, depending on circumstances.
- **Take familiar items.** A favourite blanket, toy, or bed can provide reassurance and comfort during the visit.
- **Ask about a gentle process.** You are always able to ask your vet about options such as sedation beforehand, time to say goodbye, and a slow, unhurried approach.

Honouring their memory

Aftercare options will be explained by your veterinarian and may include cremation (with or without ashes returned), burial where permitted, or keepsakes such as paw prints, fur clippings, or collars.

Many families find comfort in small rituals such as:

- Lighting a candle in their memory
- Planting a tree or garden
- Writing a letter of farewell
- Creating a photo album or tribute
- Sharing memories with the GAP community.

Grief is part of love

Grief looks different for everyone. Some people feel it immediately, while others experience it gradually over time. There is no right or wrong way to move through it. What matters most is knowing that your greyhound was safe, loved, and cared for in their final moments. That is a lasting and meaningful legacy.

You are not alone

Whether you are preparing for this decision, experiencing it now, or reflecting on it afterwards, support is always available. The GAP team is here to listen and support you whenever you need.