

PET HEALTH

brought to you by



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Mon & Fri • 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

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Dr. Sara Rowland

Plan Ahead for 3231 E. Highland Drive Your Pets After You're Gone

We don't like to plan for our own deaths, but it's something that needs to be done. We've been conditioned to think about making arrangements

for any children still young enough to need care and possibly for other family members as well. Our belongings have places they're supposed to go, and maybe we've even thought about what sort of funeral service we would like. But most of us haven't given a moment's thought to what would happen to our pets if something should happen to us. And yet, our pets are counting on us to do so. How can you ensure that your pets will be well cared for if something happens to you? You can't leave money to your pet because, in the eyes of the law, an animal is a piece of property, with little more legal status than a chair. Instead, you must leave your pet (and money to take care of the animal, if you can) to a friend, relative or organization that will look out for your pet's interests. While you should formalize any arrangements with the help of an attorney,

it's essential to discuss your plans with the person you've chosen to handle your affairs, and with anyone you hope will adopt your pet. You might assume a friend or family member will adopt your pet, but that same person, no matter how well-meaning, may not be prepared for the responsibility and might quickly drop off the animal at the nearest shelter. The time to find this out is now, so you can make other arrangements. If you have more than one pet, you may need to make a separate arrangement for each one. Before any of this happens, I have asked a family member I trust to determine if the animals are young and healthy enough to make the adjustment. With each pet will go a sum of money, either to offset the cost of handling the adoption (in the case of the parrot and the pocket pets), or to provide for the costs of lifetime care (in the case of the dogs). Hard to think about? You bet it is! But life is uncertain, and although I prefer not to think of the "what ifs," I know it's my responsibility to the pets I love to be certain they're in good hands if something happens to me. The Web site of the Association of the Bar of New York

City www.abcny.org offers information on providing for your pet after your death. You can access the information by clicking on "Reports/Publications," then on "Brochures," and finally by clicking on "Providing for Your Pets in the Event of Your Death or Hospitalization." Although the information specifically applies to New York state law, it's broad enough to outline all the options. Even better: The association provides sample documents to show how to draw up agreements that will protect your pets. Being prepared for the worst, or at least the inevitable, can ease some of the concern at that time when everyone is upset and no one is sure what to do. Outlining exactly what you want to happen makes a big difference.

*VeterinaryPartner.com; By
Gina Spadafori*



Please contact Jonesboro Family Pet Hospital or your veterinarian for further information on planning ahead for your pets after you're gone.