



**L**osing a pet is difficult for every family member, including other pets. Often, when we have more than one pet, they form the same attachment to each other as we do. Even if they are of an opposite species or did not seem the best of friends, it was probably comforting to them to have another animal around for companionship.

### ***Signs Your Pet is Grieving***

Some surviving pets may not appear to be affected by the loss, but this doesn't mean that they're insensitive or happy that their friend is gone. It may just be that he or she doesn't understand what has happened. With these types of pets, adjustment may seem smooth and uneventful.

For other surviving pets, their grief seems obvious. They may go to the window or door and wait for their friend or search the house and yard for them. They may show decreased appetite and disinterest in activities, or they may be anxious or restless. They may even seem depressed. Just as people react to loss, our pets may react in the same way.

It is important that you be observant and in tune to your pets behaviors after the death of a companion. If you have more than one surviving pet, you may see different reactions, as well as a change in the social structure of their relationship. There may be some aggressiveness between surviving pets as they establish a new hierarchy. It is important that you allow the pets to work this out on their own, as punishment will only increase anxiety levels. However, if it continues or results in serious injuries, you will want to consult with your veterinarian for advice.

### ***Ways to Help Your Grieving Pet***

There are several ways to help surviving pets adjust to the loss of an animal companion. Maintaining your pet's daily routine is very important, as keeping your surviving pet's activities and environment familiar will provide security. Meal times, walks and other activities should be provided on the regular schedule in order to help them more easily adjust to the changes that have taken place around them.

While it's difficult to see your pet unhappy and grieving, don't encourage this behavior by comforting them. Allow him or her their space, and reward only healthy behaviors. The same applies if your pet seems disinterested in eating. Don't fuss or give 'special' food, but rather feed as normal. If your pet doesn't eat within 15 minutes or so, pick up the bowl and try again later. Keep in mind however, that refusal to eat can be a serious problem, especially with cats. Be sure to consult your veterinarian should this occur.

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## ***Getting A New Pet***

Getting a new pet is something that the entire family should be ready for, including your surviving pet. Just as a new pet will not relieve your own feelings of grief, it will not for your surviving pet, either. Allowing your pet, yourself and your family time to completely heal will make the addition of another pet much easier.

### ***Remember***

It's important to remember that just like people, surviving pets will experience their grief in different ways and stages. Sometimes it may be obvious, other times not. If you have any questions or concerns, it is best to contact your veterinarian. He or she is trained and experienced enough to know when your pet's behavior is a concern. Never give medication or other remedies to relieve your pet's anxiety or stress without consulting your vet. Keeping up with your pet's routine and rewarding healthy behavior, along with patience, will most often be the best medicine.

### ***Get More Help...***

Do you think your surviving pet is depressed? Would you like to talk to others about your loss? Why not join us for our weekly Pet Loss Support Group?

If you cannot wait for our weekly group or would like to talk with others between meetings, please visit the Chance's Spot Pet Loss Support Message Board. You can post messages about your loss for others to respond to, or read and respond to messages from other members. The Message Board is continually updated by members and moderators so you will likely receive a response right away.

You are also welcome to post about your loss on the Chance's Spot Pet Loss and Support Resources [Facebook Page](#).