



**MORRIS  
ANIMAL  
FOUNDATION**

**GOLDEN RETRIEVER  
LIFETIME STUDY**

## NECROPSY CONSIDERATIONS

We understand that a necropsy procedure may not be possible under some circumstances, despite advanced planning. Please carefully consider the following when deciding whether to pursue a necropsy.

### Emotional

- Are you comfortable having a necropsy performed?
- Would you like your dog's ashes?
- Would you like to bury your dog?
- Are you willing to transport the body and how far? If not, is there someone willing to assist you with transport?

Ensure the veterinarian performing the necropsy understands your needs. If you wish to bring home your dog's ashes, you will need to make that clear to the veterinarian. This is called an individual cremation.

If you wish to bring your dog home for burial, discuss a cosmetic necropsy with your veterinarian. In this case, your veterinarian will only collect essential samples to determine cause of death and will return your Hero to you for burial.

If there is not a veterinarian in your area able to perform the necropsy, consider how far you would be willing to transport your Hero, or if a member of the Study volunteer team would be available to assist you.

### Financial

- How much will the veterinarian charge?
- Do you still have your \$500 reimbursement available?
- Will reimbursement cover the total cost?

Please review the estimate with your veterinarian to determine if a necropsy is financially feasible for you.

The Study allots up to \$500 for biopsy and necropsy reimbursement over a Hero's lifetime. Reimbursement may be requested by emailing an itemized invoice to [grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org](mailto:grdogs@caninelifetimehealth.org).



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## Preparedness

- How familiar is the veterinarian with the Study?
- Do you or the veterinarian have a necropsy kit?
- Is the Study team available?

Necropsy samples can be collected with or without a necropsy kit. It is most beneficial for the Study if the samples are submitted to our partner laboratory, Zoetis Reference Labs.

- Tissue should be collected in formalin using a container (or containers) with a tight-fitting lid. Use 10 parts of formalin to 1 part tissue, by volume.
- Once tissue is in formalin, it is “fixed” and stable for several days. This is an excellent time for the vet to contact the Study team. The team can provide shipping labels and additional instructions.

Instructions are also available at [www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/grls-veterinarians](http://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/grls-veterinarians)

## Timeline

- How long has it been since the dog passed?
- Does the veterinarian have time to perform a necropsy?
- How long will the samples sit before they can be mailed?
- If necessary, do you have a location to store the body?

When a dog dies suddenly and your veterinarian is unavailable, we recommend an abbreviated necropsy procedure if it can be conducted within 12-24 hours post-mortem. Keeping the remains cool but not frozen preserves the tissue so it can be examined by a pathologist.

- Wrap the body in a blanket and place in an attached garage or basement (cool outside temperatures).
- Place the body in the coolest room of the house (warm outside temperatures).
- If the remains are accidentally frozen, your veterinarian can still proceed with the necropsy procedure but should limit tissue collection.



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## Sample Collection

- Will you also be collecting clinical samples?
- Will you be pursuing a Study vet, university, or partial/ cosmetic necropsy?
- Was your dog's death unexpected or is the cause of death unknown?

The necropsy kit contains materials for tissue and clinical sample collection. If not feasible, you may forgo clinical sample collection.

Determine which extent of sample collection you are most comfortable with. University necropsies are the most in depth, and you will not be able to bury your dog.

All necropsy types are beneficial to determining the cause of death of your Hero.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Is a necropsy required?**

No - you always have the option to forgo this sampling. We always ask that you do what feels most comfortable for you given the situation at hand.

### **Do I need to complete a full necropsy?**

No. We would like to prioritize the tumor(s) and adjacent healthy tissue if applicable. See page 8 of the necropsy instruction manual for a list of the core tissues.

### **Does my necropsy have to be done at a university?**

No. If you choose to go to a university, please ensure they know to release the report and samples to the Study.

### **Does my necropsy have to be done by a Study veterinarian?**

No, but please ensure they have a necropsy kit and submit to our associated laboratory.