



# Quality-of-Life Scale

When evaluating quality of life, personalized patient and client information is needed to reach an educated, informed and supported choice that fits not only the pet's medical condition, but the family's wishes.

## Suggestions on Using This Quality-of Life Scale:

1. Complete the scale at different times of the day, most pets do better in the morning and worse at night
2. Ask multiple family members to complete the scale, compare observations
3. Take periodic photos of the pet to help remember their physical appearance

### Part 1: Pet's Quality of Life

Score each subsection on a scale of 0-2:

0 = I agree (describes my pet)

1 = I see some changes

2 = I disagree (doesn't describe my pet)

1. Social Functions
  - a. Desire to be with the family hasn't changed
  - b. Interacts normally with family and other pets
2. Natural Functions
  - a. Appetite remained the same
  - b. Drinking remained the same
  - c. Urination habits remain the same
  - d. Bowel movements remain the same
  - e. Ability to ambulate remain the same
3. Mental Health
  - a. Enjoys normal play activities
  - b. Still dislikes the same things
  - c. No outward signs of stress or anxiety
  - d. Does not seem confused or apathetic
  - e. Nighttime activity is normal, no changes
4. Physical Health
  - a. Shows no change in breathing patterns
  - b. Shows no outward signs of pain, (ie: limping)
  - c. Does not lie around the house or yard
  - d. Overall condition has not changed recently

### Results

- 0-8 Quality of life is most likely adequate. No medical intervention required yet.
- 9-16 Quality of life is questionable and medical intervention is suggested.
- 17-36 Quality of life is a definite concern. Changes will likely become more progressive and severe. Veterinary guidance will help you better understand the end stages of your pet's disease process in order to make a more informed decision regarding hospice care or elect peaceful euthanasia.

### Part 2: Family's Concerns

Score each item on a scale of 0-2:

0 = I'm not concerned at this time

1 = There is some concern

2 = I'm concerned

### I'm concerned about the following things:

1. My pet's suffering
2. My desire to perform nursing care for my pet
3. My ability to perform nursing care for my pet
4. My pet dying alone
5. Not knowing the right time to euthanize
6. Coping with the loss
7. Concern for other animals in my household
8. Concern for other members in the family

### Results

- 0-4 Your concerns are normal. You have either accepted the inevitable loss of your pet and understand what lies ahead or have not given it much thought.
- 5-9 Your concerns are mounting. Begin by educating yourself on your pet's condition, which is the best way to ensure you're prepared for the emotional changes ahead.
- 10-16 Your concerns about your pet are valid. Now is the time to build a support system. Veterinary guidance will help you prepare for the medical changes in your pet and other health care professionals can begin helping you with anticipatory grief.

### Ask Questions

These open ended questions will help gauge the family's time, emotional, and (if appropriate) financial concerns;

1. Have you ever been through a pet loss before? What was your experience (good or bad)?
2. What do you hope the life expectancy of your pet will be?
3. What is the ideal situation for your pet's end of life experience (at home, pass away in sleep)?

