

How Will I Know?

Assessing your pet's quality of life can be a difficult process because many characteristics determine quality of life. Often, the quality of your pet's life declines when there is a decline in multiple areas. Below are some guidelines that may help you in making this decision. Each category can be scored from 1 to 10, 10 being the best. A total score above 35 indicates that hospice care can continue.

- Hurt: _____ Unfortunately our pets cannot tell us that they are in pain so we must watch for signs of discomfort such as: Increased vocalization, rapid breathing, inability to sleep, lethargy, decreased appetite, lying hunched over, and nausea (which may include vomiting or increased salivation). Please talk to us about oral, transdermal and injectable pain control that we have available.
- Hunger: _____ Some pets are not able to keep enough nutrients in to maintain their body weight. This may lead to lethargy or weakness. There is also a pleasure that is gone when food can no longer be eaten. Sometimes a feeding tube can be helpful.
- Hydration: _____ Decreased hydration can make a patient very uncomfortable and weak. Many pets tolerate subcutaneous fluids under their skin quite well and we can show you how to do this at home.
- Hygiene: _____ Pets that are not able to urinate and defecate on their own seem to be less happy. The ability to eliminate waste is one of the core functions in life. It can be upsetting to a pet when they make a mess because they have been taught proper elimination behavior. We can assist them by grooming them and setting up comfortable, easy to clean areas.
- Happiness: _____ When pets have a poor quality of life they often change their behavior. A pet that used to ask for attention all the time suddenly hides and vice versa. They can also become irritable. Pets should be able to experience joy and mental stimulation.
- Mobility: _____ Pets like to be able to move around. When they are no longer mobile they can be very unhappy. Often pets like to search around or follow their owners, so lack of mobility can be frustrating. Slings and carts can be helpful in allowing mobility.
- More good days than bad: _____ Too many bad days in a row or the pet being "turned off" from life shows a poor quality of life. Bad days include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, pain, frustration, seizures, lack of tail wagging, and a weak human-animal bond.
- TOTAL: _____

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance in making this decision. It is a very difficult one. Often your heart will let you know. You must consider what your pet likes and dislikes. No one knows your pet better than you.