



How Do I Know When it's Time?

Assessing Quality of Life for Your Companion Animal and Making End-of-Life Decisions

Our treasured friends bring us so much joy, and more love than we can ever imagine. Making the decision to euthanise your much-loved pet may be one of the most difficult decisions you ever make.

Often, we make the decision to put our pets to sleep when they no longer have the quality of life we know they deserve. Their quality of life is based on their physical and mental wellbeing, not just one factor. This chart is aimed to help you put all these pieces together. It is important to remember that all pets are different. What may be considered a good or poor quality of life for one may be different for another.

Using this chart, you can assess each factor on a scale of all the time to never. Higher scores equal a better quality of life. In some cases, even one or two factors being on the left-hand side may indicate a poor quality of life (i.e. uncontrolled pain or inability to ambulate) even if many factors are still positive.

Some items or symptoms on the list may be expected side effects of the treatments that your pet is undergoing. It is important to discuss these symptoms and side effects with your veterinarian.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER:

- What has my pet always looked forward to? Perhaps playing at the park, swimming or food. Are they still eager and able to enjoy these activities?
- How did my pet look prior to becoming unwell? It can be difficult to appreciate gradual changes when we are always with them, but looking at photos or videos when they were healthy may help.

“HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT’S TIME?”

- Enlist the help of your veterinarian. While your veterinarian cannot make the decision for you, it is helpful for him/her to know that you are considering euthanasia.
- Mark good and bad days on a calendar. Some may choose to distinguish morning from evening. This could be as simple as a happy or sad face for good or bad. If the bad days start to outweigh the good, it may be time to discuss euthanasia.

Queensland
Veterinary
Specialists



STAFFORD
263 Appleby Road,
Stafford Heights, Qld 4053
P: 07 3359 0777
F: 07 3359 0722
stafford@qldvetspecialists.com.au

NORTHLAKES
53 Flinders Parade,
North Lakes, Qld 4509
P: 07 3384 2222
F: 07 3384 2244
northlakes@qldvetspecialists.com.au

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME?

This is a difficult time and a difficult decision, so we hope that the chart below can help you.

DATE: _____

WEIGHT: _____

Poor quality of life

Good quality of life



Strongly agree <i>All the time</i> – severe	Agree <i>Most of the time</i> – significant	Neutral <i>Sometimes</i> – mild	Disagree <i>Occasionally</i> – slight	Strongly disagree <i>Never – none</i>
---	---	---------------------------------------	---	--

My pet...

Place "X" on each line below that best fits your pet's current quality of life

Is not eating well					
Is not drinking well					
Is losing weight					
Is having diarrhea often					
Is not urinating well					
Is not as active as normal					
Seems to be experiencing pain					
Is vomiting or nauseous					
Does not interact with me in the same way as before					
Needs my help to move around normally					
Does not enjoy the same activities as before					
Their demeanor or behavior is not the same as prior					
Has more good days than bad days					
Is lethargic					
Seems dull or depressed					
Is unable to keep self-clean after soiling					
Has a greasy or matted coat					
Struggle to medicate					
How is my pet's overall health compared to the initial diagnosis/illness?	worse		same		better

Current Quality of Life (place "X" along the line that best fits your pet's quality of life)

Poor



Good