

End of Life Decision Making Score Sheet

A Numerical Score Sheet To Help You Decide If It Is Time To Put Your Pet To Sleep



This is one of the hardest decisions you will make with your beloved pet family members. Most of us need help in making this critical decision. We are very emotionally close to our pets and we do not want to be **“too early”, or “too late”** in this decision. This is a numerical scale I’ve constructed to help you in this decision. It is by no means a guarantee, but meant to simply help all of us when making this critical decision. Score each category with a 0 to 10 number with 10 being a good or acceptable level of the symptom and 0 being the worst possible score. At the end, if your number is below 50 then it may be time to consider euthanasia.

Score	Category of Symptom
0-10	Breathing – Is breathing normal, or difficult, labored, slow or rapid? Breathing is <i>the</i> number one criterion for health.
0-10	Eating & Drinking - Is the pet eating enough? Is it interested in food? Do you have to tempt your pet to eat anything at all? Will it only eat treats?
0-10	Pain – <i>We do not want our pets in pain.</i> Is your pet showing signs of pain? Indicators of pain are not only the outward crying when touched, but panting, shaking or shivering, not wanting to lie down, not able to get up easily, standing in odd positions etc. Pain should absolutely be treated and can be treated more aggressively near the end of life. But if you see symptoms such as these even with treatment - this is a bad sign.
0-10	Bladder & Bowel Control - The inability to hold urine or feces is called incontinence. Does your pet dribble or leak where it sleeps? Do you find pieces of stool or puddles of urine around the house? Has your pet lost memory of its house or litter-box training?
0-10	General Attitude – pets may simply become depressed or even physically weak from debilitating diseases. This is usually slow and progressive and must be watched. They will have “good days, then bad days”, but pay attention to the overall average of their general attitude.
0-10	Chronic Disease – cancer, uncontrollable diabetes, heart failure, arthritis and other degenerative bone problems and many other things that were, at one time, treatable or controllable may now have become untreatable or incurable and this should be considered a bad sign for future quality of life.
0-10	Weight Status – weight loss can be sudden or chronic. It is often seen in older pets. But if severe or rapid, it indicates a potentially more serious problem.
0-10	Gastro-Intestinal Status – if your pet cannot keep food down or has regular loose stools, this is not a good sign. Dehydration will occur rapidly and so will a decline in overall health and quality of life. A functioning GI system is one of the top essentials in quality of life.
0-10	Normal Daily Activities – In human medicine these are called (ADL’s) or Activities of Daily Living. You know what your pets do every day that is a part of their normal daily routine. If disease of any kind prevents them from enjoying a “normal day” then you have to consider their quality of life is decreasing. You can graph this, or simply know by observations that they are losing the enjoyment of life, their home and their interaction with you and family. Score that from 0-10 and see what you think is their overall enjoyment of daily life.
*TOTAL	<i>*A total over 50 to 60 points represents acceptable life quality and you may want to consider continuing to treat your pet or get second opinions for treatment. Below this level it may be time to be concerned about the progression of the disease and ending suffering would be humane.</i>