

End-of-Life Decision Making Score Sheet (EOL)

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 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.

To score your pet’s condition, use numbers from 0 to 10 (Where a 10 is ideal or normal).

Range	Score	Score These Things Remember a low score is worse, a high score is better
0-10		Breathing – Breathing is <i>the</i> number one criterion for health. Is the breathing normal, or difficult, labored, slow or rapid? Count breaths for 15 sec. and multiply that by four to get Respiratory Rate. Normal should be between 10 to 30 breaths/min.
0-10		Eating & Drinking – Appetite often fails near the end of life. 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! – (Remember a low number is a lot of pain, a high score is very little pain!) Many pet owners do not know how to understand the signs of pain in animals. 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 <u>treated more aggressively near the end of life.</u> IF you see these indicators of pain even with treatment - this is a bad sign, and you would score your pet lower on this scale.
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 the memory of its house or litter-box training? If so, it is a lower number.
0-10		General Attitude – pets become physically weak and even depressed from debilitating diseases. The progress is slow and must be watched. They will often have “good days, then bad days”, but pay attention to the overall average of their general attitude. Have they lost the “Joy” in life?
0-10		Chronic Disease – Many diseases like cancer, uncontrollable diabetes, chronic heart failure, osteoarthritis, liver or kidney failure and other things that were, at one time, treatable may now have become uncontrollable or untreatable 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 can mean a serious and immediate problem.
0-10		Gastro-Intestinal Status – if your pet cannot keep food down or if it is either constipated or if it has regular loose stools, this is a very concerning 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 must consider their quality of life is decreasing. You can graph this by using the QOL Sheet every week or month, or simply know by observations that they are losing the enjoyment of life, and their interaction with you and family. Score that from 0-10 and see what you think is their overall enjoyment of daily life. Zero would be little to no joy left in life, a higher number is better.
*TOTAL		*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. However, below this level is where it may be time to be concerned about the progression of the disease and where ending suffering would be humane.