

Quality of Life Scale - How will I know when it's time?

When evaluating the quality of life of your pet, information about your own pet and family is important to reach an educated, informed, and supported choice that fits not only your pet's medical condition but also your wishes and expectations. Quality of life applies not only to your pet but also to you.

Suggestions on using this quality of life scale:

- Complete the scale at different times of the day. We find most pets tend to do worse at night and better during the day.
- Request that multiple family members complete the scale and compare observations.
- Take periodic photos of your pet to help you remember their physical appearance.

Score each subsection on a scale of 0-2:

0 = agree with the statement (describes my pet)

1 = some changes seen

2 = disagree with the statement (does not describe my pet)

Social Functions

___ Desire to be with the family has not changed

___ Interacts normally with family or other pets (for example no increased aggression or other changes)

Physical Health

___ No changes in breathing or panting patterns

___ No outward signs of pain (excessive panting, pacing, and whining are most commonly seen)

___ No pacing around the house

___ My pet's overall condition has not changed recently

Mental Health

___ Enjoys normal play activities

___ Still dislikes the same thing (for example still hates the doorbell = 0, or doesn't bark at the doorbell anymore = 2)

___ No outward signs of stress or anxiety

___ Does not seem confused or uninterested

___ Night time activity is normal, no changes seen

Natural Functions

___ Appetite has stayed the same

___ Drinking has stayed the same

___ Normal urination habits

___ Normal bowel movement habits

___ Ability to walk and move around has stayed the same

Results:

0-8 Quality of life is most likely adequate. No medical intervention required yet, but guidance from one of our vets may help you identify signs to look for in the future.

We are here for you. Contact us on 041 3734243 or scvc@corpdiel.co.za

9–16 Quality of life is questionable and medical intervention is suggested. Your pet would certainly benefit from a veterinary check and advice to evaluate the disease process he/she is experiencing.

17–36 Quality of life is a definite concern. Changes will likely become more progressive and more severe in the near future. Veterinary advice will help you better understand the end stages of your pet's disease process in order to make a more informed decision of whether to continue care or elect peaceful euthanasia.

My Family's Concerns

Score each section on a scale of 0-2:

0 = I am not concerned at this time

1 = There is some concern

2 = I am concerned about this

I am concerned about the following things:

Pet suffering

Pet dying alone

Not knowing the right time to euthanise

Concern for other household animals

Desire to perform nursing care for your pet

Ability to perform nursing care for your pet

Coping with loss

Concern for other members of the family (for example my children)

Results:

0-4 Your concerns are minimal at this time. You have either accepted the inevitable loss of your pet and understand what lies ahead, or you have not yet given it much thought. If you have not considered these things, now is the time to begin evaluating your own concerns and limitations

5-9 Your concerns are mounting. Begin your search for information by educating yourself on your pet's condition; it is the best way to ensure you are prepared for the emotional changes ahead

10-16 Although you may not place much value on your own quality of life, your concerns about the changes in your pet are valid. Now is the time to prepare yourself and to build a support system around you. Veterinary advice will help you prepare for the medical changes in your pet while our grief counsellors can begin helping you with anticipatory grief

Discuss the questions below, and the entire Quality of Life Scale, with one of our vets or our grief counsellors.

- Have you ever been through the loss of a pet before? If so, what was your experience (good or bad, and why)?
- What do you hope the life expectancy of your pet will be? What do you think it will be?
- What is the ideal situation you wish for your pet's end of life experience? (at home, pass away in her sleep etc)

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