



Bradford Pet Hospital

12770 S Pflumm Rd

Olathe, Kansas 66062

913-768-6688 – bradfordpet@gmail.com

How Do I Know When it's Time?

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

At Bradford Pet Hospital, we understand that deciding to euthanize your companion may be one of the most difficult decisions to make. Often, well-loved pets are euthanized to minimize unnecessary suffering. The quality of animals' lives is defined by their overall physical and mental well-being, not just one aspect of their lives. The chart on the reverse side of this sheet attempts to consider all aspects of your pet's life. It is important to remember that all pets are different. What may be considered a poor quality of life for one may be different for another. This chart may help you better visualize the general well-being of your pet.

Higher numbers on this chart equal a better quality of life. In some cases, even one item on the left-hand side of the chart (for example: pain) may indicate poor quality of life, even if in many of the other items 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 the veterinarian.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is the most important thing when considering my pets' end-of-life treatment?
- What are my thoughts about euthanasia?
- Would I consider euthanasia if the following were true about my pet?:
 - Feeling pain
 - Can no longer urinate and/or defecate
 - Has become uncontrollably violent or is unsafe to others
 - Has stopped eating
 - Is no longer acting normal
 - Has a condition that will only worsen over time
 - Financial limitations prohibit treatment
 - Palliative (hospice) care has been exhausted or is not an option
 - The veterinary team recommends euthanasia
 - The veterinary team recommends euthanasia, but the required symptoms or situations that I listed above are not present

"How do I know when it is time?"

The following tools may aid you in making the decision to euthanize.

- Enlist the help of your veterinarian. While your veterinarian cannot make decisions for you, it is helpful for us to know that you are considering euthanasia.
- Remember how your pet looked and behaved prior to the illness. Sometimes changes are gradual, and therefore hard to recognize. Look at photos or videos of your pet from before the illness.
- 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.

Write a concrete list of three to five things your pet likes to do. When your pet is no longer able to enjoy these things, it may be time to discuss euthanasia.

How Do I Know When it's Time?

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

Survey Date:_____

Weight:_____



My pet...	Strongly Agree (All the time) (Severe)	Agree (Most of the time) (Significant)	Neutral (Sometime) (Mild)	Disagree (Occasionally) (Slight)	Strongly Disagree (Never) (None)
Does not want to play	1	2	3	4	5
Does not respond to my presence/interact with me in the same way as before	1	2	3	4	5
Does not enjoy the same activities as before	1	2	3	4	5
Is hiding/isolating	1	2	3	4	5
Demeanor/behavior is not the same as it was prior to diagnosis/illness	1	2	3	4	5
Does not seem to enjoy life	1	2	3	4	5
Has more bad days than good	1	2	3	4	5
Is sleeping more than usual	1	2	3	4	5
Seems dull and depressed	1	2	3	4	5
Is panting (even while resting)	1	2	3	4	5
Is trembling or shaking	1	2	3	4	5
Is vomiting and/or seems nauseous	1	2	3	4	5
Is not eating well–(may only be eating treats or only if fed by hand)	1	2	3	4	5
Is not drinking well	1	2	3	4	5
Is losing weight	1	2	3	4	5
Is having diarrhea often	1	2	3	4	5
Is not urinating well	1	2	3	4	5
Is not moving normally	1	2	3	4	5
Is not as active as normal	1	2	3	4	5
Needs my help to move around normally	1	2	3	4	5

Is unable to keep self clean after using the bathroom	1	2	3	4	5
Has hair coat that is greasy, matted, or rough-looking	1	2	3	4	5
How is my pet's overall health compared to the initial diagnosis/illness?	1 Worse	2	3 Same	4	5 Better
Current Quality of Life (place "X" along the line that best fits your pet's quality of life)	<p><-----></p> <p>Poor Good</p>				

Score	Criterion
0-10	Pain – Adequate pain control & breathing ability is of top concern. Trouble breathing outweighs all concerns. Is the pet's pain well managed? Can the pet breathe properly? Is oxygen supplementation necessary?
0-10	Hunger – Is the pet eating enough? Does hand feeding help? Does the pet need a feeding tube?
0-10	Hydration – Is the pet dehydrated? For patients not drinking enough water, use subcutaneous fluids daily or twice daily to supplement fluid intake.
0-10	Hygiene –The pet should be brushed and cleaned, particularly after urinating or defecating. Avoid pressure sores with soft bedding and keep all wounds clean.
0-10	Happiness – Does the pet experience joy and interest? Is the pet responsive to family, toys, etc.? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored, or afraid? Can the pet's bed be moved to be close to family activities?
0-10	Mobility – Can the pet get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help (e.g. a cart)? Does the pet feel like going for a walk? Is the pet having seizures or stumbling? (Some caregivers feel euthanasia is preferable to amputation, but an animal with limited mobility yet still alert, happy and responsive can have a good quality of life as long as caregivers are committed to helping their pet.)
0-10	More Good Days Than Bad – When bad days outnumber good days, quality of life might be too compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the care giver must be made aware that the end is near. The decision for euthanasia needs to be made if the pet is suffering. If death comes peacefully and painlessly at home, that is okay.
*Total	* A total over 35 points represent acceptable life quality to continue with pet hospice (Pawspice).