



Black Creek Mobile Veterinary Services

Pet Quality of Life Scale

This QoL scale is a helpful tool to assist pet lovers in the assessment of whether to continue pet comfort and/or hospice care or make a euthanasia decision. The five H's stand for: Hurt, Hunger, Hydration, Hygiene and Happiness. The two M's stand for Mobility and More good days than bad.

Score patients using a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = unacceptable, 10 = ideal).

Score

The HHHHMM Pet Quality of Life Scale

/10

HURT - Is your pet in pain or distress? Can your pet breathe properly? (signs of distress may include open-mouthed breathing, a fast breathing rate or with effort) Adequate pain control & ability to breathe comfortably is of top concern. **Trouble breathing outweighs all concerns.** Consider: Is your pet's pain well managed? Can adjustments be made to their treatment plan? Is oxygen necessary?

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HUNGER - Is your pet eating enough to maintain their caloric needs? Is your pet losing weight despite a good or ravenous appetite? Consider: Are you filling their bowl less, food remaining in their bowl, or hand feeding? Tracking your pet's weight is helpful. Nutritional supplements, prescription diets, and feeding tubes may be needed.

/10

HYDRATION - Is your pet dehydrated? Is your pet drinking too much? Consider: For pets not drinking enough water, canned foods, HydraCare (TM), +/- subcutaneous fluids may be needed if tolerated. Fresh water should always be available in multiple locations.

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HYGIENE - Is your pet able to stay clean and dry? Is your pet urinating/defecating normally in their usual location? Is your pet able to maintain their grooming and coat quality? Consider: brushing and cleaning your pet, particularly after eliminations. Avoid pressure sores with soft bedding & keep wounds clean.

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HAPPINESS - Does your pet still experience joy and interest in daily activities (ex. walk, toys, play, brushing)? Is your pet engaging in social interactions with people and pets? Or still dislike the same things (vs. not caring anymore)? Is your pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored or afraid? Consider: modify activities to meet your pet's needs, provide enrichment, and limit known stressors. Remember: anxiety can be seen with pain, disabilities, and cognitive dysfunction; can adjustments be made to their treatment plan?

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MOBILITY - Is your pet moving comfortably? Is there any limping, hesitation with movement, difficulty on stairs? Do they need assistance to get up? Is your pet able to go outdoors or litter box for eliminations? Consider: mobility aids ([Dr. Buzby's Toegrips](#), ramps, steps, slings, harnesses, etc.) paired with good pain control to help your pet.

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MORE GOOD DAYS THAN BAD - What constitutes a 'bad day' is highly individual from pet to pet & person to person. When 'bad days' outnumber good days, quality of life might be too compromised and suffering is likely. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware that the end is near. The decision for euthanasia needs to be made when your pet is suffering. Consider: A Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Veterinarian can help you in the decision-making process.

Total Score
out of 70

*A total over 35 points represents acceptable life quality or the suggestion to continue with pet hospice care & comfort measures. Speak with your vet further to optimize pain & symptom management.

Petcomfortvet.com



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Original concept, Oncology Outlook, by Dr. Alice Villalobos, Quality of Life Scale Helps Make Final Call, VPN, 09/2004.

Modified & Adapted from: Canine and Feline Geriatric Oncology: Honoring the Human-Animal Bond, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.