



Quality of Life Scale: The HHHHMM Scale¹

The letters stand for: **Hurt, Hunger, Hydration, Hygiene, Happiness, Mobility, and More Good Days than Bad.** Evaluating and giving honest scores to these criteria assists the veterinary team and helps pet caregivers face reality. It helps them struggle through the difficult and emotionally draining process of making the final call to provide the gift of compassionate euthanasia to assure a peaceful and painless passing for a beloved pet.

Score patients using a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being ideal and 0 being the worst-case scenario.

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| | HURT – Adequate pain control, including breathing ability, is first and foremost on the scale. Is the pet’s pain successfully managed? Is oxygen necessary? |
| | HUNGER – Is the pet eating enough? Does hand feeding help? Does the patient require a feeding tube? |
| | HYDRATION – Is the patient dehydrated? For patients not drinking enough, use subcutaneous fluids once or twice daily to supplement fluid intake. |
| | HYGIENE – The patient should be brushed and cleaned, particularly after elimination. Avoid pressure sores and keep all wounds clean. |
| | HAPPINESS – Does the pet express joy and interest? Is the pet responsive to things around him or her (family, toys, etc.)? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored or afraid? Can the pet’s bed be close to the family activities and not be isolated? |
| | MOBILITY – Can the patient 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, yet an animal who has limited mobility but is still alert and responsive can have a good quality of life as long as caregivers are committed to helping the pet.) |
| | MORE GOOD DAYS THAN BAD – When bad days outnumber good days, quality of life might be compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware the end is near. The decision needs to be made if the pet is suffering. If death comes peacefully and painlessly, that is okay. |
| | TOTAL A total over 35 points represents acceptable life quality |

1. Adapted by Villalobos, A.E., Quality of Life Scale Helps Make Final Call, VPN, 09/2004, for Canine and Feline Geriatric Oncology Honoring the Human-Animal Bond, by Blackwell Publishing, Table 10.1, released 2006.