

## Canine Quality of Life Scale (the HHHHMM Scale) Adapted from Dr. Alice Villalobos

**HURT** Adequate pain control, including ensuring breathing ability, is first and foremost on the scale. Is my dog's pain successfully managed? Is he/she breathing easily? Does he/she need pain medication?

1 = Is severely painful, is mouth breathing, or panting 3 = Is moderately painful more than 50% of time, breathing is labored 5 = Is mildly to moderately uncomfortable less than 50% of time, breathing is increased but not labored 7 = Is mildly or infrequently uncomfortable, breathing is increased but not labored 9 = Is completely comfortable, breathing normally

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**HUNGER** Is my dog eating enough? Does hand feeding help? Does my dog need an appetite stimulant or a feeding tube?

1 = Is not eating at all 3 = Will eat a little if coaxed 5 = Won't eat regular food, but eats well if offered baby or people food (something special) 7 = Appetite is less than before, but still interested in food 9 = Wonderful appetite, eats as well as ever

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**HYDRATION** Is my dog well hydrated? Does he/she need fluid therapy, either at home or at the hospital?

1 = Moderate to severe dehydration 3 = Hydration is not normal, but dehydration is minimal 5 = Water consumption is decreased, but hydration is still adequate 7 = Fluid intake varies from day to day, but hydration is adequate 9 = Drinks water normally or excessively. Maintaining normal hydration

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**HYGIENE** My dog should be kept brushed and cleaned, particularly after elimination. Bedsores must be avoided, and all wounds kept clean.

1 = My dog is severely matted (painful), has pressure sores, or is badly soiled 3 = My dog is moderately matted, or coat is soiled. 5 = My dog has a few small mats, but his/her skin and coat are clean. 7 = My dog is not grooming as well, but I am able to keep coat and skin clean and wound-free. 9 = My dog is grooming himself/herself normally and is not soiled. He/she has no wounds.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**HAPPINESS** Does my dog express joy and interest? Is he/she responsive to things (family, toys, etc.)?

1 = Is isolated more than 50% of time. Shows no interest in previously enjoyed activities. 3 = Is spending 50% of time isolated. Seems depressed, lonely, anxious, bored, or afraid. 5 = Spends some time alone, but still likes to spend time with family. 7 = Is still interested in old activities, but cannot always perform them. 9 = Is still doing all the activities he/she was doing before he/she became ill.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**MOBILITY** Can my dog get up without assistance? Does he/she need human help? Is he/she having wobbliness or stumbling?

1 = Is no longer able to make it to outside to urinate/defecate. Soils on himself/herself 3 = Activity is decreased by more than 50%, but can still make his/her way to food and outdoors 5 = Ability to play, jump, run, and do normal activities is decreased by less than 50% 7 = Ability to play, jump, run, and do normal activities is decreased by less than 25% 9 = Has normal mobility, plays as he/she did before they became ill

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**MORE GOOD DAYS THAN BAD** When there are too many bad days in a row, quality of life is too compromised and euthanasia should be considered. Bad days may be days filled with undesirable experiences such as vomiting,

nausea, diarrhea, frustration, falling down, seizures, and so forth.

1 = No good days 3 = Bad days are 4 to 6 in 7 5 = Bad days 2 or 3 in 7 7 = Bad days are 1 in 7 9 = No bad days

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Over 5 is acceptable in each category. When the score drops below 5, intervention is necessary. If further intervention is not possible (all options have been tried), then euthanasia should be considered. In the words of Dr. Alice Villalobos, the veterinary oncologist whose Quality of Life Scale was adapted above, "One day, you will just know it is the right time because your pet will tell you with a look or a gesture, a sign or a series of bad days." It is important to remember that the decision to euthanize a terminally ill patient is not a failure. It is a humane, loving, treatment option, and one that will prevent needless suffering.