



How do I know if my cat's quality of life is low?

We can never make perfect choices - we just do the best that we can with the information we have. Worrying about making the “wrong” call at the “wrong” time is completely normal and understandable. The important thing is making a decision out of love.

Think back over the past 1-2 weeks and if applicable, compare to their normal behavior when they were healthy. How often has your cat:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Prominently moved their abdominal muscles while breathing?					
Breathed with their mouth open?					
Been winded by activity they're normally able to do?					
Stretched out their head/neck to breathe better?					
Been unable to lie down, or lies down and is up in a few minutes despite appearing exhausted?					
Shown signs of pain? (See separate handouts)					
If taking pain medication, had periods of pain between doses?					
Been unable to rest due to pain?					
Had difficulty doing normal activities (eating, walking, urinating, defecating etc)?					
Had trouble falling or staying asleep all night?					
Paced or wandered as if agitated or lost?					
Vocalized for no apparent reason?					
Acted panicky and wouldn't settle down?					
Hidden or withdrawn from others in the family?					

Only eaten special foods or treats, was more picky, or not interested in food at all?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Wanted food but couldn't or wouldn't eat?					
Had signs of nausea (drooling, lip licking, vomiting, new aversions to certain foods)?					
Was unable to participate in the activities they normally enjoy?					
Stopped or lost interest in an activity earlier than usual?					
Shown a lack of interest in their surroundings or goings-on?					
Seemed indifferent to seeing loved ones?					
Seemed cranky, irritable, or unusually aggressive toward family members/other pets?					
Not wanted to be touched?					
Had skin sores, red and irritated skin, or open wounds that were bothering them?					
Stopped using the litter box or was unable to get to the litter box to urinate or defecate?					
Had a greasy coat or clumped fur (especially along the spine)?					

Do any of the following apply?

- ☐ I chose "Often" or "Always" for any question
- ☐ I chose "Sometimes" for more than 2-3 questions
- ☐ Considering all of the above, it seems like my pet is having more "bad" days than "good"

If so, please talk with your veterinarian about next steps. If improvement isn't possible, or is unfeasible due to financial, emotional, or time constraints, you can plan a gentle farewell knowing you've done everything you could with love and care.

Every pet deserves peace, comfort, and dignity at the end of life

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