

Time to say goodbye?

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As our companion dogs and cats begin to age, they may develop illnesses or diseases which can begin to affect their quality of life. In some cases, early detection blood screening is helpful in catching these diseases early and postponing progression. There are other illnesses though such as cancer or heart disease that can develop slowly under the radar and may not be noticeable until your pet's quality of life begins to decline.

When I have an owner bring their pet to me with concerns over quality of life, I certainly examine the pet, but more importantly, I discuss with the owner the pet's behavior at home. There are three criteria I consider in evaluating a pet's quality of life. First, is your dog or cat still acting as a companion and coming around to be scratched and given affection to? Second, is your cat or dog willing to eat regularly and if so, able to keep food down without vomiting? Finally, is your dog or cat able to go to the bathroom (posture) without falling or having to sit in their own waste? If any of these are questionable, I would begin to consider medical intervention and if that is unsuccessful, humane euthanasia.

Many pet owners struggle with the decision to end their pet's life by humane euthanasia. I explain to pet owners in this predicament the process of euthanasia to help them in their decision making. In my experience, it is a peaceful process where their dog or cat will fall asleep first in their lap or on a soft blanket and then their breathing and heartbeat will stop after they have lost consciousness. I also explain that I consider it our gift to our companions to end their suffering peacefully. Most owners usually find comfort in knowing these details

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