

Peaceful

The Quality of Dying Checklist ©
Hospice Assisted Unhastened Dying

This checklist is designed to determine acceptable quality of life to continue the normal dying process.

GRACE



Gratitude & Respect for Animals & their Care at End of Life

Hospice care is skilled comfort care to the end of a life wherein death is neither hastened nor postponed.

In those exceptions when an animal patient's comfort cannot be adequately maintained, or the caregiver's emotional, physical, financial or other resources are insufficient, animal hospice care can be ended by euthanasia.

P	E	A	C	E	F	U	L
PAIN	EMACIATION	APPETITE & THIRST	COMFORT	ELEVENTH HOUR WHAT ELSE MAY BE GOING ON	FLUID	UNRESPONSIVE	LOW ENERGY LISTLESS
<p>Dying does not cause pain; disease causes pain.</p> <p>Adequate pain control is most important. Strong, fast acting pain medication (in a preparation that does not require swallowing) is to be kept on hand in case of sudden need. Sublingual route preferred.</p> <p>Keep in mind that animals in their final stages often need considerably lower doses of medications per body weight than previously.</p> <p>If the disease process is prone to create, or has already caused a need for oxygen supplementation, oxygen for home use must be kept on hand.</p>	<p>Substantial loss of body weight is normal at the end of life and generally does not constitute discomfort to the patient.</p>	<p>Decreasing appetite is normal during the dying process, often preceding a lack of thirst. Neither is to be confused with reversible symptoms of a treatable condition. Consult your hospice-trained veterinarian. For the dying body, digestion is no longer a priority. The scent of food can cause nausea. Keep food out of room unless offered. Offer choices of food periodically, including by finger or syringe, until rejected. Also water. Complete disinterest is to be accepted. Avoid giving food or water in the absence of interest or after the swallowing reflex has ceased. It may cause considerable discomfort or choking. Consider appetite may wax and wane.</p>	<p>Keep patient's environment clean, quiet and stress free.</p> <p>It is essential that caregivers remain as calm and present as possible.</p> <p>Keep anti-anxiety medicine on hand in case terminal restlessness occurs.</p> <p>Maintain comfort and dignity via basic hygiene during the process of dying; i.e. very gently clean up any bodily discharges that may occur.</p>	<p>Eyes may be glassy or dull. Lips, gums and anus may be pale.</p> <p>Extremities may be cooler. May observe paddling of front legs.</p> <p>There may be localized light muscle twitching.</p> <p>Bladder and/or bowels may empty.</p> <p>Irregular breathing may occur. If congestion is present keep nostrils clean.</p> <p>Backward arching of head and neck may be seen.</p> <p>Keep environment quiet and clean!</p>	<p>Dehydration progresses; endorphins are released by the brain, promoting comfort.</p> <p>The mouth can be kept moistened with drops of lukewarm water from a syringe, dropper or moistened applicator.</p> <p>Subcutaneous fluids may be helpful to a certain point along the process.</p> <p>Consult with your hospice-trained veterinarian.</p>	<p>For many animals, interest in the immediate environment dwindles at the end of life as focus turns inward.</p> <p>Some animals may remain responsive and a little interactive until late stages.</p> <p>Restlessness may occur as the animal experiences changes occurring in his/her body.</p> <p>In case of increasing agitation give low dosed medicine already supplied by your hospice-trained veterinarian.</p>	<p>As life energy dwindles, most animals will be recumbent at the end of life, resting quietly and peacefully the majority of the time.</p>