

*Hospice Care Packet*

# Quality of Life Signs

How will I know when it is time? This is a very difficult question to answer. The answer varies depending on the pet and the disease, if any. (If your pet has been diagnosed with a disease please ask your veterinarian for disease specific information.) These are some signs to look for regarding quality of life: Pain, appetite, mobility, hygiene and happiness.

-Pain ~ Common signs of pain include, pacing, hiding, no longer seeking interaction with family, excessive panting, growling, snapping, immobility, whining, flinching when touched, and not eating. Discuss with your veterinarian any signs of pain that are particular to your pet's diagnosis.

-Appetite ~ Is your pet losing weight? No longer interested in food or water? A lack of appetite or thirst can be a sign that the body is shutting down. Nausea can also cause a loss of appetite. Discuss with your veterinarian whether an appetite stimulant or medication may help reduce nausea is appropriate for your pet. You may also try novelty foods to tempt your pet to eat.

-Mobility ~ If your pet is being faced with mobility issues, please discuss what treatments may be available to help your pet.

- Providing good traction at home can be very helpful. (Rug runners or yoga mats can help on tile, linoleum and/or wood floors)

- Food and water bowls should be placed in a location that is easy for your pet to get to. Adding multiple water bowls into other rooms in the house may also be a benefit to your pet.

- Stairs can be a challenge for both you and your pet to navigate. Baby gates can help prevent a fall.

- Harnesses can be purchased to aid in helping your pet get up. A beach towel under the abdomen as sling can also help them get around.

- If not already on the floor lower your cat's litter boxes. Some litter boxes have high edges; it may be helpful to purchase one with lower edges. (Using the bottom of a dog carrier may help.) You can also try using a thinner layer of litter.

- If not already on the floor, lower your cats' bowls. Some cats may find it difficult to jump onto high surfaces for food. If you have a dog or have multiple cats that need to be fed separately, you may want to feed in a separate room where a door can be shut.

-Hygiene ~ Some patients may begin to have "accidents" inside the home or in bed. Choose bedding that is easy to launder and keep it clean and dry. Watch your pet closely for urine scalding and sores on their body. If they do have an accident, you can purchase pet-specific wipes to help clean them. Sometimes trimming or shaving fur from problem areas will help in keeping them clean. Many cats (and some dogs) will stop grooming and become matted.

-Happiness ~ As your pets' caregiver you will be best at determining when your pet no longer seems "happy". You may want to write a daily diary or follow a quality of life scale so you can assess your pet's progress and keep an overall track of overall good days vs. bad.

A few signs to look for:

- Changes in attitude or personality
- Becoming depressed, aggravated, or confused.
- Changes in normal routine (ie. no longer greets you when you come home.)
- Seems distant
- Hiding, particularly in unusual places.
- Not wanting to do the things that they love.
- Decreased interest in playing.

# Hospice Care Information

**Quality of Life Charts** – 1. [www.lapofLove.com](http://www.lapofLove.com)

2. The HHHHm scale Available for download at [www.pawspice.com](http://www.pawspice.com)

## **Services -**

**Acupuncture** – Alternative Veterinary Services

9 Hodges St. North Andover MA 01845

978-683-5775

[www.altvetservices.com](http://www.altvetservices.com)

**Chiropractor** – Alternative Veterinary Services

9 Hodges St. North Andover MA 01845

978-683-5775

[www.altvetservices.com](http://www.altvetservices.com)

**Hydrotherapy/Massage/Reiki -**

Good Dog Aquatic

29 North Main St. North Andover MA 01845

978-685-3647

[www.gooddogaquatic.com](http://www.gooddogaquatic.com)

**Laser Therapy** – Andover Animal Hospital

233 Lowell St. Andover MA 01844

978-475-3600

[www.andoveranimal.com](http://www.andoveranimal.com)

## **Emergency Hospitals**

Westford Animal Hospital

270 Littleton Rd #20, Westford MA 01886

978-692-4328

[www.westfordanimalhospital.com](http://www.westfordanimalhospital.com)

**Bulger Veterinary Hospital**

247 Chickering Rd. North Andover Ma 01845

978-682-9905

[www.inghospitals.com](http://www.inghospitals.com)

**AVC Emergency and Referral Veterinary Center**

55 Carl Dr. Manchester NH 03103

603-669-2002

[www.avcnh.com](http://www.avcnh.com)

**MSPCA Angell**

350 South Huntington Ave. Boston MA 02130

617-522-7400

[www.mspca.org](http://www.mspca.org)

**Tufts University – Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine**

200 Westboro Rd North Grafton, MA 01536

508-839-5395

[Vet.tufts.edu/fhsa/](http://Vet.tufts.edu/fhsa/)

**Mobile Grooming- Aussie Pet Mobile**

60 Rockingham Rd. Windham, NH

603-894-7387

[www.aussiepetmobile.com](http://www.aussiepetmobile.com)

**The Cats Meow (NH only)**

3 Blueberry Lane Londonderry, NH 03053

603-548-1817

[www.catsmeowpetgrooming.com](http://www.catsmeowpetgrooming.com)

**Fur all Corp**

1 Pheasant Hollow West Newbury, MA 01985

978-835-1602

<http://fur-all.com>

Dippity Do Dog Mobile Pet Spa  
Raymond NH 03077  
603-568-3920  
Dipptydodogmobile.com

### **After Care Options –**

Crematoriums – Andover Animal Hospital  
233 Lowell St. Andover MA 01844  
978-475-3600  
[www.andoveranimal.com](http://www.andoveranimal.com)

Forget – Me – Not Crematory  
80 Lyman St. Northborough Ma 01532  
508-393-0133  
[www.forget-me-notpetcrematory.com](http://www.forget-me-notpetcrematory.com)

### **Cemeteries-**

Hillside Acre Animal Cemetery  
400 Nevins Rd. Methuen Ma 01844  
978-685-0632

The Pine Ridge Cemetery  
55 Annas Place Dedham Ma 02026  
781-326-0729  
[Pineridge@arlboston.org](mailto:Pineridge@arlboston.org)

### **Urns-**

Andover Animal Hospital  
233 Lowell St. Andover Ma 01810  
978-475-3600  
[www.andoveranimal.com](http://www.andoveranimal.com)

Perfect Memorials – [www.perfectmemorials.com](http://www.perfectmemorials.com)  
Terry bear – [www.terrybear.com](http://www.terrybear.com)

## **Pet Loss Groups/information-**

[www.twoheartpetlosscenter.com](http://www.twoheartpetlosscenter.com)

[www.animalhealthfoundation.net](http://www.animalhealthfoundation.net)

[www.petloss.com](http://www.petloss.com)

[vet.tuft.edu/petloss](http://vet.tuft.edu/petloss)

# Euthanasia

All of us here at Andover Animal Hospital know how hard it is to make the decision to euthanize your pet. Quality of life is a personal judgment; you know your companion pet better than anyone else. We are here to help you through the process.

If you do decide to euthanize your pet, we think it is important you know what to expect. When you first come in you will need to sign a form giving consent to euthanasia. In this form you will indicate your decision for care of remains and also certify that to the best of your knowledge the pet has not bitten anyone or any animal in the past 10 days and has not been exposed to Rabies. You may decide to be present with your pet or choose not to stay during the procedure.

Euthanasia is performed by giving an overdose of a barbiturate anesthetic, generally given intravenously. Within seconds of starting the injection, the anesthetic will cause the pet to go to sleep, then the heart to slow, and then stop. On rare occasions there may be a brief vocalization or cry as consciousness is lost; this is not pain. Once your pet has passed, you might observe involuntary muscle contractions or respiratory gasps, this is not evidence of pain or consciousness, it represents a physiologic response that occurs whenever the brain is deprived of circulation. Your pet may keep their eyes open as well as lose control of their bladder and bowels.

Options for care of remains include burial at home, at a cemetery, or cremation.

-Burial- Many cities have ordinances against home burial so check with you local officials before laying your pet to rest.

-Cemeteries- The closest cemetery is Hillside Acre Animal Cemetery which is in Methuen Massachusetts. More cemeteries are listed in the information list located in this packet.

- Cremation – Cremation of pet remains is done on our property, you have the option of having your pets ashes returned to you, there is an additional fee for this service, or you can opt to not save them. For more cremation options refer to the information list in this packet.