

Knowing When It's Time: Understanding Your Pet's Quality of Life

Family Matters

This is the question every loving pet guardian hopes they'll never have to ask.

"How will I know when it's time?"

There is no blood test that gives the answer.

No X-ray.

No scan.

Instead, the answer comes from understanding your pet's **quality of life**.

At Amity, we believe that quality of life—not simply the length of life—should guide every important decision we make. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you navigate one of life's hardest decisions with clarity, compassion and love.

It's About Living, Not Simply Being Alive

Many people hope their pet will simply "go to sleep" peacefully at home. While this sometimes happens, it is uncommon.

More often, pets gradually lose the things that once made life enjoyable.

Instead of asking,

"Are they still alive?"

Ask,

"Are they still living?"

Are they still enjoying the things that make them who they are?

For one dog, it may be chasing a tennis ball.

For another, greeting you at the door.

For a cat, it may simply be sitting on your lap or sleeping in the sunshine.

Only you know what has always brought your pet joy.

Looking Beyond the Diagnosis

A diagnosis doesn't determine quality of life.

Many pets live happily with arthritis, diabetes, kidney disease or heart disease for months or even years.

Instead, ask yourself:

- Are they comfortable?
- Are they eating well?
- Are they interested in family life?
- Are they still enjoying their favourite activities?
- Can they rest comfortably?
- Do they still seem content?

These answers often tell us far more than any blood test ever could.

Good Days and Bad Days

Everyone has an occasional bad day.

That alone doesn't mean it's time.

However, when the bad days begin to outnumber the good ones, it may be a sign that your pet's quality of life is changing.

Many families find it helpful to keep a simple diary or calendar, marking each day as good or bad. Looking back over several weeks often makes gradual changes easier to recognise.

There Is Rarely a Perfect Moment

One of the things we hear most often is:

"I don't want to make the decision too early."

Closely followed by,

"I don't want to leave it too late."

These are the words of someone acting out of love.

There is rarely a perfect day that makes the decision obvious.

Our goal isn't to wait until a pet is suffering greatly.

It's to help them leave this world with dignity, before suffering outweighs enjoyment.

You're Not Alone

At Amity, we'll never make this decision for you.

But we will help you.

We'll explain what we're seeing medically, listen to what you're experiencing at home and give you our honest opinion with kindness and compassion.

Sometimes treatment can restore quality of life.

Sometimes it can maintain it.

And sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts, the kindest gift we can give is a peaceful goodbye.

Remember, every important decision you've made throughout your pet's life has been because you loved them.

This final decision is no different.

Because love isn't measured by how long we hold on.

It's measured by always putting their welfare before our own heartache.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.