QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

# How is your pet feeling?

**La Cumbre Animal Hospital**
Santa Barbara, California
(805) 967-0121

Deciding when to say goodbye is one of the hardest choices you will make for a companion you love. This survey looks at seven areas of daily comfort. Check the one description in each section that best fits the past week, then add up the scores. Repeat every few days or whenever something changes, so you can see the trend rather than a single hard day.

Pet's name _____ Date _____ Dog ☐ Cat ☐

**Call right away** if you see struggling to breathe or open-mouth breathing in a cat; pale, gray or blue gums; collapse; a seizure lasting more than 3 minutes or several in one day; straining without passing urine; or pain that medication is not controlling. Current clients can call us at **(805) 967-0121**. After hours, please go to the nearest 24-hour emergency hospital.

## 1 Pain & breathing

Cats hide pain: watch for hunching, squinting, hiding, or not jumping up.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | No signs of pain. Breathes easily and gets up and lies down comfortably. | **10** |
| ☐ | Occasional stiffness or discomfort that improves with medication or rest. | **7** |
| ☐ | Often uncomfortable: restless, breathing harder at rest, hiding, or sensitive to touch. | **4** |
| ☐ | Pain or labored breathing is constant or not controlled by medication. | **0** |

## 2 Appetite

A cat who stops eating for even a day or two can become seriously ill.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Eats normally and shows interest in food. | **10** |
| ☐ | Pickier or eats less, but eats with a little encouragement. | **7** |
| ☐ | Eats only when hand-fed, offered special foods, or given appetite medication. | **4** |
| ☐ | Has refused food for 24 hours or more. | **0** |

## 3 Hydration

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Drinks normally and keeps water down. | **10** |
| ☐ | Drinking more or less than usual, but keeping up. | **7** |
| ☐ | Needs encouragement, wet food, or fluids under the skin to stay hydrated. | **4** |
| ☐ | Cannot keep fluids down or is dehydrated despite help. | **0** |

## 4 Hygiene

Cats who stop grooming often feel unwell.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Keeps clean and uses the usual bathroom spot. | **10** |
| ☐ | Needs some help staying clean or has occasional accidents. | **7** |
| ☐ | Frequently soiled, matted, or has regular accidents. | **4** |
| ☐ | Lies in urine or stool, or has sores that will not heal. | **0** |

## 5 Happiness

Greeting you, play, purring, interest in walks or the window.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Engaged and interested in family, toys, and surroundings. | 10 |
| ☐ | Less interested than before, but still enjoys favorite things. | 7 |
| ☐ | Withdrawn, anxious, hiding, or not responding to the family. | 4 |
| ☐ | No interest in anything, including favorite people. | 0 |

## 6 Mobility

Getting up, stairs, jumping, reaching the yard or litter box.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Moves normally for age. | 10 |
| ☐ | Slower and stiffer, or needs help with stairs or jumping. | 7 |
| ☐ | Struggles to rise, slips or falls, or needs help to reach the bathroom area. | 4 |
| ☐ | Cannot stand or walk without full support. | 0 |

## 7 Good days vs. bad days

Think about the past week.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Nearly all good days. | 10 |
| ☐ | Mostly good days, with some bad ones. | 7 |
| ☐ | About as many bad days as good, or more bad than good. | 4 |
| ☐ | Mostly bad days. | 0 |

**Total score** _____ out of 70

**50 – 70**

### Comfort looks good right now

- Retake this survey weekly, or sooner if anything changes.
- Track good and bad days on the calendar on the next page.
- Senior pets benefit from exams every six months.

**36 – 49**

### Quality of life is changing

- Schedule a quality-of-life consultation with one of our doctors.
- Pain control, appetite support, fluids and mobility aids can often bring back good days.
- We can help you plan ahead so decisions are made calmly.

**35 or below**

### It may be time to talk about saying goodbye

- Please call us. We will listen, examine your pet, and help you decide what is kindest.
- Choosing a peaceful goodbye before suffering becomes severe is a final act of care.

**Any section scored 0?** Even if the total looks reassuring, a single area at the lowest level deserves a call to our team.

TRACKING OVER TIME

# Good days and bad days

Each evening, circle **G** for a good day or **B** for a bad day. When bad days begin to outnumber good ones, it is time to talk with us. Bring this page to your visit.

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B |
| Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B |
| Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B |
| Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B |
| Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B | Date ____<br>G B |

## Survey log

| DATE | TOTAL SCORE | NOTES: MEDICATIONS, CHANGES, QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Questions to ask us

Is my pet in pain, and can we control it better? What signs should I watch for? What would palliative or hospice care involve? What can I expect when it is time, and who can be present?

## Plan ahead

Many families find comfort in deciding aftercare wishes in advance and planning a favorite meal, a quiet afternoon or time with loved ones. Our team will walk you through every step.

Adapted from the HHHHHMM Quality of Life Scale developed by Dr. Alice Villalobos, and consistent with the 2016 AAHA/IAAHPC End-of-Life Care Guidelines, which encourage families to track good and bad days and partner closely with their veterinary team. Quality of life is personal, and no scale can replace an examination. Please use your results to start a conversation with our doctors, not to make a decision alone. La Cumbre Animal Hospital · (805) 967-0121