

Is It Time? An Objective Test.

A client perfectly summarized it this way: “Is he happy?” Past that simple question let’s get **THREE** things out of the way: The following three things **do not count** as reasons for an ancient, infirm or frightened dog or cat to be kept alive:

1. Still eating
2. Gets around (I saw a dog with a 3 pound tumor on its face being kept alive because of this alone.)
3. “Wags tail when she sees me” (I saw a dog drowning of lung-edema being kept alive for this.)

Eating is the single strongest **drive in a dog or cat to eat**. Hard-wired into the DNA. Don’t wait to euthanize a dog or cat just because it’s still eating. They typically ARE.

Getting around is not a qualifier for artificially prolonging life, if the other parameters of Quality Of Life are absent. **NOT** being able to get around IS a good reason for euthanasia.

Wagging their tail when they see you is their MEANING OF LIFE. Dogs (especially) will suffer through ANYTHING to see their beloved owners. If conscious at all, they will almost-NEVER stop cherishing your presence. Even when their eye is bulging out of their head with cancer, or they’re drowning in fluid in their lungs. Or crying in pain from ruined hips.

Parameter	Yes	Nope
The “No Questions”		
Joins the family for various functions it was once interested in.		
Wags its tail and seems happy during its waking hours.		
Has its own version of “play” which can be different from its youth. But is “play” nonetheless.		
Can walk comfortably		
Can walk at all		
Can hear		
Can see		
Is mentally “present”		
Will be getting better soon		
Is prevalingly ‘happy’		
When I see her, it makes me happy.		
The “Yes Questions”		
Has a terminal disease / condition		
Infirmities like “blind and deaf” have him ‘jumpy’ and <i>everything startles him</i> .		
Is in pain		
Is significantly infirm or “unable”.		
“I sometimes wish I would come downstairs and she’d be gone in her sleep.”		
People are encouraging me to “let him go.” And have exhibited ‘pity’ towards him.		
When I see her, it makes me sad.		
I feel like “Who am I to decide whether she lives or dies? I feel like an executioner , and that is why my companion continues to suffer.” [This is so common!]		
“ I thought I would know when it was time (and that is why my companion continues to suffer).”		
“I know what’s right, I know it’s time, but it hurts too much to carry it out. (And that is why my companion continues to suffer).”		