

## How do I know when it's time?

The following tools may aid you in making the difficult decision.

- Enlist the help of your veterinarian. While your veterinarian cannot make the decision for you, it is helpful for him/her to know that you are considering euthanasia.
- Remember how your pet looked and behaved prior to the illness. Sometimes changes are gradual, and therefore hard to recognize. Look at photos or videos of your pet from before the illness.
- Mark good and bad days on a calendar or in a jar. (Some may choose to distinguish morning from evening.) This could be as simple as a happy or sad face for good or bad. If the bad days start to outweigh the good, it may be time to discuss euthanasia.
- Write a concrete list of three to five things your pet likes to do. When your pet is no longer able to enjoy these things, it may be time to discuss euthanasia.

<b>Factors to Consider</b>
<b>HUNGER:</b> Can your pet eat on their own? Have they lost interest in food?
<b>HURT:</b> Are they in constant pain even if on pain medication? adequate pain control, including the ability to breathe, is the most important aspect of quality of life.
<b>HYGIENE:</b> Can your pet groom themselves? Can your pet go to the bathroom on their own and control their bowels?
<b>MOBILITY:</b> Determine whether your pet is able to move around on its own or with help in order to satisfy its needs.

## Coping with the Loss of a pet

Making a decision about euthanasia can be one of the most challenging, heartbreaking choices to face. It is important to discuss any questions, fears, or concerns with your Veterinary team. The connection our pets have within our lives is a very special one. Due to this, the loss of a pet can cause us to face many emotions. Examples of these emotions can include anger, denial, guilt, pain, and sadness. The response of a loss, and journey of grief can be different for all individuals. The loss of a pet is a loss unlike any other. It is considered a form of disenfranchised grief. This type of grief is not always recognized as a "valid" form of grief among society. It is important to remind yourself the loss of your pet is valid, and your grief is too. Following a loss, it is key to connect with others and seek additional assistance if needed. Outlets such as pet loss support through online chat rooms, and phone lines can help during this challenging time.