



SILVER LAKE ANIMAL PRACTICE

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Signs of Suffering

The following can be signs that your pet is suffering, frustrated, & painful:

- Panting
- Falling/stumbling
- Hesitating or slow to do thing
- Licking or biting wrists or other joints
- Restless, shifting positions, anxious, unsettled, can't get comfortable
- Can't sleep on side for long periods, wanting to be upright all the time
- Tense or flinches with touch
- Eliminating in the house
- Dilated pupils, wide-eyed look
- Hiding
- Less time spent grooming
- Sleeping all the time, not interacting with the family
- Drooling, wet lips, chomping/licking lips
- Head hanging down
- Pale pink or white or blue tongue/gums
- Large belly
- Not eating
- Not moving
- Not walking
- Can't get up
- Difficulty laying down
- Not using one leg or limping a lot on one leg
- Vomiting
- Third eyelids up and visible

Signs of Debilitating Arthritis (very valid, humane reason to euthanize):

panting, falling, stumbling, hesitating, slow, licking wrists, biting, tense or flinch with touch, stiff, eliminating in the house, dilated pupils (pain), wide-eyed look (pain), old age weight loss and lack of muscle mass, skinny, bony, can't get up, difficulty laying down, dragging toes, knuckled over, too thin, skinny, bony, laying in urine or feces

Signs of Unstable Chest/Lungs/Breathing:

can't sleep fully on side for long periods, wanting to be upright all the time, not laying flat out on side, laying on sternum/elbows/more upright, unable to sleep well or deeply, unable to sleep for

long periods, panting, blue tongue, exhausted, coughing, restless, shifting positions, anxious, unsettled, can't get comfortable

Signs a Cat May Not Be Feeling Well:

hiding, less time spent grooming, unkempt fur, sleeping all the time, not interacting with the family, 3rd eyelids elevated/visible, skinny, bony, weight loss, attracted to heat, finding warm places to rest/sleep, head hanging down, wet lips, drooling, not eating, vomiting, can't jump up on things

Signs of Nausea/Kidney Failure:

drooling, wet lips, chomping/licking lips, head hanging down, not eating, eating less, only eating special people food, skinny, bony, "walking skeleton", vomiting, twitching

Signs of Hemangiosarcoma = ticking time bomb:

pale pink or white or blue tongue/gums, large belly, not eating, not moving, not walking, weak, panting, slow when going outside to eliminate, restless, shifting positions, anxious, unsettled, can't get comfortable, weight loss, skinny, bony, can't breathe well, can't sleep, can't lay on side, wanting to be more upright

Signs of Osteosarcoma (bone cancer):

obvious moth-eaten appearance on bone x-rays, not using one leg or limping a lot on one leg, head-bobbing limp, very large and very firm lump or tumor on leg, skin breaking open/splitting/oozing, pain may be manageable when still using the leg yet limping, pain often too great once not using the leg or holding leg up

Signs of Old Dog Vestibular Syndrome:

head tilted to one side, head cocked to one side, eyeballs jiggly/darting back and forth constantly, vomiting, drooling, nauseated, unbalanced, can't walk, falling down, dizzy, doesn't want to get up, (mild cases can recover on their own or with steroids in a few days, may take a few weeks to recover, symptoms may be too severe/too much suffering to let it go on that long so euthanasia is humane option)

Quality of Life Factors to Consider :

PAIN?

- The worst forms of pain and suffering are breathing difficulty, bone pain (debilitating arthritis and bone cancer/osteosarcoma), and nausea (most commonly from kidney failure).
- Is your pet's pain well managed?
- Can they breathe properly? Is there abdominal effort to breathe (bad)? Is there panting all the time or often (bad)?
- Can your pet sleep well for long periods (good)? Do they need to be upright (bad) to breathe, wanting to be on the elbows and chest and NOT on it's side? Can they lay on their side (good) for long periods? Are the gums and tongue pale?
- Is the belly enlarged? Hemangiosarcoma is a very common fatal bleeding cancer of the spleen that can affect the liver and heart as well. It's a ticking time-bomb that can bleed without stopping.

- Don't wait too long and get into a period where dog cannot breathe well.
- Drooling? Wet lips? Chomping/licking lips? Hanging head down? Cats in end-stage kidney failure feel like they are hung over or have to vomit constantly along with weakness. They definitely need relief once they stop eating or drinking, maybe even before that.
- Once dogs with osteosarcoma stop using the leg and hold it up all the time, the level of pain is too much. They are probably more painful than we think, even when they are still limping around on the leg.
- Remember, animals are designed to accept and hide their pain. They often don't show obvious signs of pain like crying, yelping, whining, vocalizing even though they are feeling pain.

NOT EATING ?

- Eating enough? Does hand feeding help? People food or canned food? Let your elderly pet eat whatever they like as long as it's well tolerated.
- Significant weight loss can mean serious cancer or organ failure that may not be fixable.
- Still eating does not mean all is well. Some pets are suffering/painful inside, yet still eat very well. (Debilitating arthritis is a good example.)

NOT DRINKING?

- Is your pet drinking too much or not enough?
- Is there too frequent urination or not enough?

CAN'T URINATE /DEFECATE IN THE APPROPRIATE PLACE?

- Able to get outside often?
- Can they comfortably get into position to urinate and defecate?
- Fall or shake when getting into position to urinate or defecate?
- Eliminating in the house because it's too painful to go outside?
- Laying in urine or feces?
- Leaking urine often? Do meds help with leaking urine?
- Is the skin red, raw, and painful where continuous urine leakage has caused irritation like a sunburn?
- Would a large flat container with low sides work better as a litter box for old arthritic cats?

DEPRESSED /WEAK?

- Expresses joy and interest? Responsive to family, toys, other pets?
- Depressed, lonely, anxious, frustrated, bored or afraid?
- Can your pet's bed be moved to be close to family activities?
- Does your pet seem trapped in a body that doesn't work or is painful?
- Some pets are suffering when their mobility is difficult and painful.
- Some pets are suffering even though they are still eating.
- Pale tongue/ gums? Periods of weakness that come and go?

CAN'T WALK /GET UP?

- Get up without assistance? Feel like going for a walk?
- Stumbling, shaking?
- Do pain meds help (early arthritis) or make no difference (advanced arthritis)?
- Does it help to place rugs all over the house so pet can gain good traction and stability?
- Panting?

- Stiffness?
- Muscle mass gone? Skinny? Bony?
- Head, shoulders, spine/back, hip bones visible?
- Lost a lot of weight?

TOO MANY PROBLEMS? NO EASY FIX?

- When bad days outnumber good days, or when your pet's list of problems is long, quality of life is too compromised. Euthanasia is a very important opportunity to give our cherished pet the gift of relief from terrible pain and suffering.
- We are lucky that this option is available to our pets. We don't have to watch them suffer through an often cruel and long, drawn-out natural death.
- You have the choice to let them be a little more comfortable and say goodbye peacefully and privately at home.