

Years of Cushing's Take Toll on Dachshund

Time is drawing near to relieve 12-year-old dog of his suffering.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I have a Miniature Dachshund with a lot of health issues. He's been diagnosed with Cushing's disease, an enlarged liver, a fatty tumor on his belly, and clouded pupils from aging. Louie is 12 and a great little guy whom I love with all my heart. My question is: When will I know it's time to let him go? The Cushing's makes him eat, but he's been defecating in the house. When I touch his belly, he seems to tighten up. He has been dealing with this for a lot of years. Right now I am just trying to make him comfortable.

A. It can be difficult to know when the best time is to elect humane euthanasia for your elderly or ailing pet. Keep in mind that euthanasia is the best way to end your dog's suffering; you can be there to comfort him, and your gentle touch and soothing voice will be the last thing he remembers. Unfortunately, sick dogs rarely pass away peacefully in their sleep.

A wonderful veterinary oncologist, Alice Villalobos, DVM, has developed a Quality of Life scale as part of her Pawspice (pet hospice) program that helps pet owners decide when to say goodbye. It takes into account appetite, water intake, hygiene, mobility, coat appearance, and contentment to develop an objective way to know when it is time. Check out her website at www.pawspice.com

Don't wait too long. It takes courage to make the right decision before your pet is suffering too much.