

Pet Obesity Awareness



Excessive Weight in Cats & Dogs

Obesity is a nutritional disease which is defined by an excess of body fat. Cats & Dogs that are over nourished, lack the ability to exercise, or that have a tendency to retain weight are the most at risk for becoming obese. Obesity can result in serious adverse health effects, such as reducing the lifespan, even if your pet is only moderately obese. Multiple areas of the body are affected by excess body fat, including the bones and joints, the digestive organs, and the organs responsible for breathing capacity.

Obesity is common in dogs of all ages, but it usually occurs in middle-aged cats & dogs, and generally in those that are between the ages of 5 and 10. Neutered and indoor cats & dogs also tend to have a higher risk of becoming obese, due to lack of physical activity, or changes in metabolism.

Symptoms

- Weight gain
- Excess body fat
- The inability (or unwillingness) to exercise
- An above-ideal score in a body condition assessment



Causes

There are several causes of obesity. The most common cause is an imbalance between the energy intake and its usage; that is, the cat or dog is eating more than it can possibly expend.

Obesity also becomes more common in old age because of the normal decreases in a cat's ability to exercise. Unhealthy eating habits, such as high-calorie foods, an alternating diet, and frequent treats can also bring on this condition.

Other common causes include:

- Hypothyroidism
- Insulinoma
- Hyperadrenocorticism
- Neutering

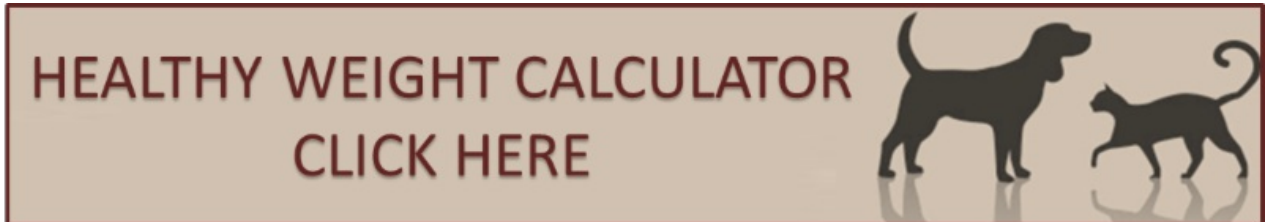
Diagnosis

Obesity is diagnosed primarily by measuring a pet's body weight, or by



scoring its body condition, which involves assessing its body composition. Your veterinarian will do this by examining your pet, palpating its ribs, lumbar area, tail, and head. The results are then compared to the particular breed standard that your cat best matches.

If your pet is diagnosed with obesity, it will be because it has an excess of body weight measuring approximately 10 to 15 percent. In the nine-point scoring system, cats which have a body condition score greater than seven are considered to be obese.



Treatment

Treatment for obesity is focused on weight loss and maintaining a decreased body weight for the long term. This is accomplished by reducing caloric intake and increasing your pet's time spent exercising. Your veterinarian will most likely have a prepared diet plan that you can use to refigure your pet's eating schedule, or will help you to create a long-term diet plan for your dog.

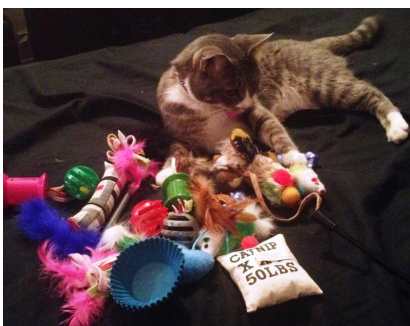
Diets that are rich in dietary protein and fiber, but low in fat, are typically recommended, since dietary protein stimulates metabolism and energy expenditure, along with giving the feeling of fullness, so that your pet will not feel hungry again shortly after eating. Dietary fiber, on the other hand, contains little energy but stimulates intestinal metabolism and energy use at the same time.

Increasing your pet's physical activity level is vital for successful treatment. The most common suggestions for dogs are leash walking for at least 15 minutes, twice a day, and playing games such as fetch. Perhaps agility classes, tracking or hide & seek.



Don't forget to exercise your dog's brain. After puppyhood and the basic obedience commands have been taught, cognitive challenges tend to drop off. Find some silly, fun behavior to teach your dog, like high fiving or bowing on command or go for more advanced behaviors such as emergency down or command by hand signals.

For more dog exercise idea's please [click here](#).



For cats, the use of interactive toys, a cat tread wheel, a cat tower, along with games of fetch, if your cat enjoys it, and other chase and catch games. To make things even more interactive and fun, create a hockey rink by putting a ball in a large cardboard box or the bathtub to create an instant "hockey rink" for your cat. As the ball goes flying off the walls (and the cat goes flying after it), you'll get some laughs and your cat will get some much-needed exercise.

Increasing your cat's physical activity level is vital for treatment. For

more cat exercise idea's please [click here](#).

Living and Management

The follow-up treatment for obesity includes communicating regularly with your veterinarian about the weight reduction program, monthly monitoring of your pet's weight, and establishing a life-time weight maintenance program once your pet's ideal body condition score has been achieved. With a firm commitment to your pet's health and weight, you will feel confident that your pet is eating healthy and feeling its best.

For more information on pet obesity please visit these links.

http://www.petmd.com/cat/conditions/digestive/c_ct_obesity

http://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/digestive/c_multi_Obesity



Please make an appointment to discuss your pet's health:

Request Appointment

ADOBE ANIMAL HOSPITAL
OF SOQUEL
We are your other Family Doctor

The advertisement features a blue background with a white and orange tabby cat on the right. The text is in white and black. A black paw print icon contains the text 'Request Appointment'. The Adobe Animal Hospital logo includes silhouettes of a dog and a cat.



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