

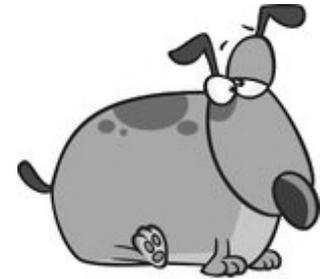


Obesity in Pets

Why obesity is bad?

Obesity has become an extremely important health concern for pets in recent years with recent estimations suggesting that up to 33% of pets suffer from obesity in the United States. A common justification for over-feeding treats is that a pet deserves a higher quality of life as a tradeoff for longevity. However, the subsequent health consequences that typically affected obese patients are as follows:

- Arthritis
- Respiratory Issues
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Hepatic Lipidosis
- Reduced Lifespan
- Unwillingness to Accept Therapeutic Diets
- Increased Surgical/Anesthetic Risk



Why is my pet obese when he doesn't eat that much?

An owner may believe that managing their pet's weight would be easier than that of a human, however, as with humans, a pet's weight can be affected by multiple factors. These factors may include:

- Correct measurement – This may seem simple but a cup of food means a cup of food. This excludes using mugs, coffee cups, and other scoops that may not actually measure one cup or 8 ounces.
- The “Package Guidelines” are just guidelines – Many packages of food include a recommended feeding schedule and amount that should be fed due to the pet's weight, however, these guidelines are meant as a starting point only. If you have any concerns please bring in the package and discuss appropriate calorie intake for your pet with a veterinarian.
- Genetics – As with humans, some pets have genes that predispose them to obesity
- Children at Home – Children love to drop food and share food, so they may be feeding your pet without you being aware
- Slow Metabolism – Some pets simply do not burn calories efficiently. This may be genetic or the result of a metabolic disease such as hypothyroidism or Cushing's disease.
- Treats – Feeding treats to your pet can quickly add additional calories to your pet's diet. These may be freely given or during training, however, you should always be aware that they do add up
- Neutering your Pet – Spaying and neutering your pet is a very good thing and helps stop the creation of unwanted pets, however, this can cause your pet to create more fat cells – this is especially for female cats. So monitoring their food is especially important.

How do I manage my pet's weight?

Managing your pet's weight can be accomplished in a few simple steps, which include:

- Feeding a prescription diet specially designed for weight loss
- Feeding the correct calorie intake for your pet
- Weighing your pet regularly to monitor progress
- Feed in meals – no free feeders as these encourage snacking

The most important step in managing your pet's weight is to rule out any metabolic diseases that could be the cause of your pet's weight gain.