

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT AND YOUR PET

How to create a healthy lifestyle for your pet

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF CATS AND DOGS ARE OVERWEIGHT! According to research from the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, 58 percent of cats and 53 percent of dogs in the U.S. were overweight in 2017 (APOP, 2017). Just like people, pets that carry extra pounds have increased health risks, including diabetes, joint damage, difficulty breathing and a shortened life span. In fact, dogs fed for a lean body weight lived an average of 15 percent longer than dogs who were not calorie restricted (Purina, 2002).

A pet's weight is a very important part of their overall health. **With proper management, pet owners can help keep their pets at a healthy, comfortable weight and increase both their quality and length of life.**

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

The first step in weight management is to meet with your veterinarian to determine the ideal weight for your pet. During the meeting, your veterinarian might recommend **counting your pet's calorie intake and measuring your pet's food at each meal, including treats and snacks.**

Keep in mind cups come in different sizes. Check to see how much your cup holds. A standard measuring cup should be 8 ounces.



Although our pets are often considered part of our family, they are not small humans. **What is an appropriate snack for us could be unhealthy or even dangerous for our pets.** Minimize treats to those approved by your veterinarian and remember that snacks have calories too.

Even though safe weight management may seem trying at times, be patient. The results will be worth it for you and your pet!



DAILY EXERCISE is an important part of losing weight and keeping it off. **Try some of these activities to keep pets active and maintain their ideal weight:**

Dogs: Regular walks or jogs, dog park visits, or games of fetch

Cats: Play sessions with a fishing pole style toy that encourages hunting behaviors, laser pointer chase, or jumping on a multi-tiered cat tree

THE IDEAL BODY CONDITION FOR YOUR PET

Your pet's ideal body condition, which is similar to human Body Mass Index (BMI), can be difficult to assess in fluffier pets. That's why veterinarians use a standardized body condition chart to determine if your pet is at their healthiest weight. As a pet owner, you can use this system as well to monitor and manage your pet's weight:

IDEAL CAT BODY CONDITION:

- > Observable waist behind ribs.
- > Ribs not prominent, but easily felt.
- > Minimal to absent fat on tummy area, not to be confused with extra skin.



Your veterinary team is here to help you! Brief trips to your veterinary clinic to use the pet scale are an easy way to stay on track with your pet's progress each week.

IDEAL DOG BODY CONDITION:

- > Observable waist when viewed from above.
- > Can feel ribs easily with only slight to no fat covering.
- > Tummy slopes up when viewed from the side.