



Weight Loss



Pet _____ Weight _____ Ideal Weight _____ Calories per Day _____

We have determined that your pet is overweight. This is a very common problem in cats and dogs (almost 25% of all cats and dogs are overweight). Now that we have identified this as a problem, it is important for you to take steps to decrease your pet's weight. This handout will provide you with information about obesity and suggestions to help correct your pet's weight problem.

Why is Obesity a Problem?

Obese pets are at greater risk for a number of diseases including diabetes, heart disease, hepatic lipidosiis (a liver disease of cats), and certain forms of cancer. In addition, the extra weight puts stress on the bones and joints leading to a variety of problems. Obese dogs often have difficulty breathing, especially during periods of exercise. These conditions can cause irreversible damage once they develop. However, many of these problems and health risks can be reduced if your pet loses just a few pounds. Don't wait for these problems to develop. Start working to decrease your pet's weight today.

Choosing the Proper Diet.

The type of food that you feed your pet is not nearly as important as the amount and the number of calories you that are feeding him or her. If your pet has a lot of weight to lose, we usually suggest using ®Hill's Prescription diet R/D. This allows you to feed your pet a caloric controlled diet. If your pet still seems famished eating the recommended calories you may offer between meal snacks such as no sodium canned or fresh cooked green beans, or carrots (see amount below). If your pet has a moderate amount of weight to lose, you may choose a "light" diet. Almost every brand of pet food offers a reduced calorie formula. If the bag does not list the number of calories per cup, call the 800 information number provided on the bag. The company representative should be able to provide you with this information. You can also visit the Hill's Prescription Diet website at www.Hillspet.com for additional information. If your pet only needs to lose a few pounds, you may chose to keep him/her on the same food you have been feeding but reduce the amount and decrease the number of treats given daily. Table scraps are always a no no and can cause upset stomach, obesity and a variety of other health and dental problems.

Treats and Snacks

While treats and snacks should never be more than 10-15% of your pet's diet, dieting does not mean that you have to completely eliminate all treats. It does mean that you should include all treats/snacks in the total calorie count. It also means that you should try to reduce the number of calories provided as treats (too many treats will interfere with the nutrition provided by the pet food). If you are feeding dog biscuits as a reward break each biscuit up into several pieces so the amount is limited to only a small amount of treats daily. Avoid all high calorie "People foods" (table scraps), meats, and fatty foods. Between meals, if your dog or cat is hungry try offering one of the following low calorie, filling treats: Green beans (no salt added) ¼ to ½ can, raw or cooked carrots, celery, puffed rice cakes, ice cubes (ice cubes can be flavored with a small amount of tuna juice or chicken broth diluted 1 part juice to 10 parts water). Not all pets will readily eat all of these snacks. You may need to experiment to determine which snack is most satisfying to your pet. Some pet stores also carry low calorie treats/snacks, just make sure to check the calories and include them in with total caloric intake with the food.

Feeding Your Pet

How you feed your pet is almost as important as what you feed your pet. If you have more than one pet, feed pets separately to insure that your dieting pet is not eating food put down for another pet. We recommend that you feed your pet twice daily. Try to establish a set time and routine so that your pet will know when it is and is not time to eat. Leave the food out for 15-10 minutes and take up any uneaten food after this time. Do not leave food down all day for your pet to graze on, since pets tend to eat when they are bored. If you notice your pet is crying for food between meals, choose a low calorie, filling snack (see above) to satisfy your pet's hunger without adding a lot of calories to the diet. Try to distract your pet with activity or attention if it seems that he/she is looking for food because of boredom.

Counting Calories

Page one includes the number of calories that we recommend daily for your pet. It is important to include **EVERYTHING** your pet eats when determining the number of calories. If you give your pet treats or snacks, be sure to include them in the calorie count. To determine how much dog/cat food to feed, follow these instructions:

1. Refer to page 1 of the handout for your pet's recommended daily calories. _____
2. Determine how many calories are in 1 cup of food. (You may have to call company) _____
3. Divide the total of #2 (total calories in 1 cup of food) by the total of #1 (total daily calories) _____

The total of #3 will be the amount of cups per day your pet should be fed. Divide this amount into 2-3 feedings. If you feed your dog any snacks or treats, be sure to decrease the amount of each feeding to account for these calories.

Exercise

Increasing your pet's activity level will help decrease his/her weight almost as much as dietary modification. Try scheduling at least 30 minutes several times a week to do something active with your pet. Active play such as chasing a ball or stick, catching a frisbee, or swimming is good choices. You can also take your dog for walks around the neighborhood or at the local park. Start out with an easy workout and increase the intensity as your pet becomes accustomed to his/her exercise routine.

Keeping a Record

It is important to monitor your pet's progress. You should weigh your pet at least once every 2-4 weeks but not more than once a week. If your pet is small enough to safely lift, you can hold him/her while you stand on a bathroom scale. Subtract your weight to determine your pet's weight. If you have a large dog or do not own a scale, you are welcome to stop by our clinic any time during business hours to use our scale. If your pet is not losing weight, please contact one of our staff members so that we can help you modify your diet program. Use the log provided to record and chart your pet's progress.

Helping your pet lose weight requires consistency and commitment. We are ready and willing to help you any way we can. If you have questions or concerns please contact us and we'll be happy to help.

Weight Loss Log

Pet's Name _____ Current Weight _____ Ideal Weight _____

Number of Calories Recommended per Day _____

Date		Weight		Date		Weight	
Date		Weight		Date		Weight	
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