



Pet Obesity

*National Pet Obesity Awareness
Day is in October*

What is obesity?

- Obesity is an accumulation of excess body fat. Extra body weight and extra body fat tend to go hand in hand.
- Using body weight as a guide, dogs and cats are considered to be overweight when they weigh 10-20% above their ideal body weight. They're considered obese when they weigh 20% or more above their ideal body weight.

What are the risks associated with obesity?

Excess fat negatively impacts a pet's health and longevity. An obese cat or dog may live a year to two years less. Other risks include:

- cancers of all types
- diabetes mellitus
- heart disease
- hypertension
- osteoarthritis
- urinary bladder stones



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How do I know if my pet is obese?

- The first step towards helping your pet is recognizing and acknowledging that there is a problem.
- Make an appointment with your veterinarian. They can assist with an assessment and a weight loss strategy.
- If you hold your hand palm down and feel your knuckles with the flats of the fingers on the opposite hand, this is how your pet's ribs should feel just behind the shoulder blades. This is a good method for measuring weight loss progress between formal weigh-ins.

How do I adjust my pet's food for weight loss?

- There are scientifically formulated nutritional products to help with healthy and safe weight reduction in cats and dogs. It is not appropriate to simply reduce the volume of their current food. This will cause malnourishment over time. Ask your vet for their recommendations.
- It is critical that you be consistent with feeding – portions and meal frequency – and to resist the temptation to provide inappropriate snacks.
- Fresh or frozen green beans, broccoli, and cauliflower, as well as air-popped popcorn all make excellent snacks for dogs if approved by your veterinarian.
- Regular weigh-ins, every 2-3 weeks, are an important component of successful petweight loss and they keep everyone accountable.

What happens when my pet reaches it's goal?

- Your veterinary health care team can help you find an appropriate food and portion for weight maintenance.
- Portion control is critical at this stage to prevent regaining weight.

Sign up for AWA's "Biggest Loser Challenge" launching
in October!

For more information, visit www.awanj.org