

WEIGHT LOSS FOR DOGS

Obesity in pets is a very common problem, affecting as many as 40% of dogs and 30% of cats. Overweight animals experience many of the same health risks overweight humans do, including impairment of head, breathing and digestive functions. It is easy to tell if your pet is overweight. Put your hands on the side of the chest cavity and attempt to feel the ribs. If the ribs can be easily felt, but not seen, the animal is in normal condition. If you have to push hard to feel the ribs, a layer of fat is probably obscuring them. Also, the abdomen of normal dogs should be tucked up when viewed from the side, and they should have a waist when viewed from the top.



Animals become obese for the same reasons people do. That is, they take in more calories than they burn. Metabolic diseases occasionally result in obesity, but this is not a very common problem in Veterinary medicine. Obesity is almost always due to a combination of too much food and not enough exercise. If your dog is faithfully eating the number of calories recommended by this handout for 4-6 weeks and still does not lose any weight, then we can test their thyroid gland. Hypothyroidism is easily treated with a supplement given daily.

Treatment of obesity consists of a combination of diet and exercise. A number of reduced calorie foods are available and may be recommended for different situations. When a change in diet is made, it's important to remember that the animal did not gain the weight in a short period of time, so it's unrealistic to expect it to lose it all in a short period of time. Reduced calorie diets should be gradually introduced into the animal's normal diet over about a week's time. This slow transition makes it easier for the pet to adjust to the new diet without going off food, which can be particularly dangerous for cats. The day's total food should also be divided into three or four meals to help sustain the weight loss and decrease the amount of begging. If the animal begs between meals, one of the meals can be used to snacks between meals, although if feeding snacks was one of the reasons the animal gained weight then this behavior should not be continued. The dieting animal must be fed separately from other family pets and not allowed access to their food.

Exercise is essential for a weight loss program, and should be instituted once the diet is in place and some weight has been lost. The worst thing you can do is force an overweight, out of condition pet to exercise vigorously. The extra strain on the already overburdened heart and breathing systems may result in severe problems. Once some weight loss has been achieved, begin with short leisurely walks, gradually increasing the distance and time as the animal's tolerance allows. Exercise should occur during cooler times of the day and not during either extremes of hot or cold weather.

Sustained weight loss is not easy to achieve, because it requires a change in your relationship with your pet. You must respond to your pet's need for affection with something other than food, such as play or teaching "new tricks". Also, if you weigh your pet weekly and plot the weight on the chart; the visual evidence of weight loss will reinforce the success of your efforts. It will also identify problems we can work to overcome. The benefits of weight loss are improved health, and probably life expectancy, which makes the effort worthwhile.

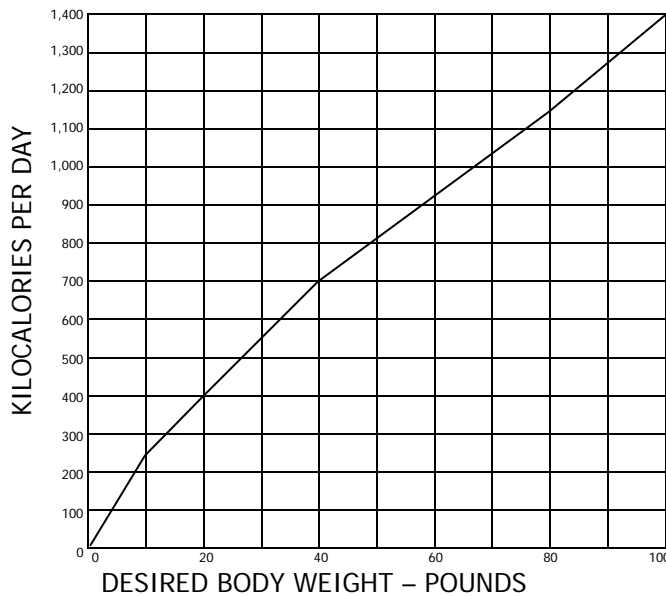
The best way to help your dog lose weight is to put them on a diet high in fiber and low in calories. Unfortunately, not all light pet foods subscribe to this theory. Many of them just cut back on the calorie content slightly and increase the fiber content a few percentage points. This is the main reason why so many foods for overweight dogs fail to accomplish their goals. Science Diet and Cycle dog foods are the best foods for this purpose because they both drastically increase the fiber content in their foods. Foods like Iams, Eukanuba, Royal Canin and Purina do not have high fiber in them and usually do not result in successful weight loss.

Recently, some cats have been found to lose weight by eating an extremely low carbohydrate diet with unrestricted protein. This mimics the Atkin's diet for people. At this time, there is not a lot of evidence that this strategy will work well in dogs.

Plan for: _____

Current Weight _____ - Desired Weight _____ = To Lose _____

DAILY ENERGY NEEDS FOR WEIGHT LOSS
(90% OF NEED AT DESIRED WEIGHT)



Expected Weight Loss Per week:

Toy Breeds < 15 lbs	¼ - ½ lb
Small Dogs 15-30 lbs	½ - 1 lb
Medium Dogs 30-50 lbs	1 - 1 ½ lb
Large Dogs 50-80 lbs	1 ½ - 2 ½ lb
Giant Dogs > 80 lbs	2 - 3 lbs

Calories to Eat Daily:

Recommended Food:

CALORIE CONTENT OF DIET FOODS

Eukanuba / Iams

Eukanuba Veterinary Restricted	238 Kcal/Cup
Eukanuba Weight Control	271 Kcal/Cup
Eukanuba Reduced Fat Form 10oz	336 Kcal/Can
Eukanuba Reduced Fat Bites	121 Kcal/Pouch
Iams Wt Control Dry	337 Kcal/Cup
Iams Wt Control Pouch	121 Kcal/Pouch
Iams Wt Ctrl Large Breed	351 Kcal/Cup

Hills

R/D Canned 13 oz*	257 Kcal/Can
R/D Dry*	220 Kcal/Cup
W/D Canned 13 Oz*	324 Kcal/Can
W/D Dry*	243 Kcal/Cup
G/D Canned 13 Oz	370 Kcal/Can
G/D Dry	358 Kcal/Cup
Science Diet Lite*	295 Kcal/Cup
Science Diet Lite 5.8 Oz*	144 Kcal/Can
Science Diet Lite 15 oz*	364 Kcal/Can

Purina

Fit And Trim Healthy Wt	320 Kcal/Cup
ONE Healthy Wt	337 Kcal/Cup
OM Canned 12.5 oz	189 Kcal/Can
OM Dry	276 Kcal/Cup

Cycle

Cycle Lite Dry*	295 Kcal/Cup
Cycle Lite Canned*	256 Kcal/Can

Royal Canin

Calorie Control 12.7 Oz can	212 Kcal/Can
Calorie Control Dry	238 Kcal/Cup
Mobility Support	271 Kcal/Cup

* - High fiber foods

CALORIE CONTENT OF TREATS

Milk Bone

X-Large -227
Large - 108
Medium - 33
Small - 19

Eukanuba

Restricted Cal - 13
Reduced Fat Biscuits - 33

Butler

Lean Treats - 7
Lean Treats Lg Breed - 17

Iams

Weight Ctrl - 19

Hills

Prescription - 13
Lite Large - 49
Lite Medium - 19