

Pets Can Win The Battle Of The Bulge With Our Help.

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Let's get a handle on pet obesity by promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

Did you know that over 30 million dogs and cats in the US are overweight or obese?

An overweight pet is defined as weighing 10-19% over the ideal weight for their breed. While an obese pet is defined as weighing 20% or more over the ideal weight. So, to put this into perspective, just two pounds of excess weight on a 10-pound dog or cat, is equivalent to a human gaining 30 pounds. That can lead to some serious health implications, such as heart disease, diabetes mellitus, arthritis, and fatty liver disease.

Have you discovered your pet has a little extra baggage lately? Take notice if your pet: doesn't have palpable ribs, doesn't have an hourglass figure (loss of waistline), has a belly which hangs down, waddles when walking, and has difficulty getting around. The good news is that obesity is a condition that is correctable. The following are just a few steps to a healthier pet:

Step 1. Nutrition

Whether your pet needs to shed a lot of pounds, or just become more fit-and-trim, a solid nutritional foundation is key. It is important to have the right balance of quality, highly digestible nutrients that match your pet's age and lifestyle.

Step 2. Pain Relief

If your pet is painful for any reason, that can be a barrier to leading a more active lifestyle. Your veterinarian is the best person to help you determine the best pain management options for your pet. There are many pain management options available that include the use of physical rehabilitation, dietary supplements, homeopathic remedies and prescription medications.

Step 3. Exercise

Keeping active is the key, so consistent activity can significantly decrease weight by demanding the body to burn more calories. As short as 5-10 minutes twice a day, three days a week can make a difference. Some pets, however, need additional guidance and support when starting an exercise regimen. Before having your pet begin any exercise program, consult with your veterinarian to make sure the activity level and supervision is appropriate for your pet's age and health status.

Getting an overweight pet started on a weight loss program can seem overwhelming at times. There is so much you want to do for your pet, and it can be difficult knowing where to start. Remember these points when your pet begins a weight loss program:

1. Set realistic goals.

Weight loss is a gradual process. If your pet is 25% overweight, it may take your pet several months to reach his or her target weight. Don't get discouraged if the weight is slow to come off at first.

2. Be conscious of how you feed your pet.

Closely supervise feedings if you have more than one pet to prevent food stealing between pets. Use a measuring cup to accurately determine the right amount to feed your pet, and divide the total amount to be fed each day into three or four small meals. The digestive tract as a whole is one of the largest organs of the body, and therefore requires a lot of energy to do its job. Feeding more frequent, smaller meals makes the

digestive tract work more often, which in turn burns more calories than feeding one or two large meals.

3. Weight management takes commitment.

Your pet may require lifelong diet and exercise changes to maintain his or her ideal weight. Stick to the plan, and work closely with your veterinarian and rehabilitation provider when any adjustments are necessary. Your veterinary health care team will do whatever they can to help you and your pet succeed, so take their recommendations to heart.

For more information about pet obesity, visit the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention at www.petobesityprevention.com

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A full-service boarding and rehabilitation center in West Lafayette, IN. Daycare services available. Specializing in canine and feline physical rehabilitation and weight loss services offered by veterinary referral. Please visit www.petmedspaandrehab.com.

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