

Obesity

Obesity is a condition where an excess amount of body fat has accumulated to such an extent that it may be having an adverse effect on your pet's health. This may lead to a number of medical conditions.

Problems of an overweight pet include:

- *Arthritis* – Excessive stress on the joints, contributes to joint degeneration and pain
- Respiratory problems
- *Diabetes Mellitus* – Excess body fat leads to an insulin resistance in cats. Diabetics are more difficult to manage medically if they are overweight.
- *Liver Disease* – The liver stores fat; when a dog or cat is overweight there is fat in the liver resulting in decreased liver function.
- *Reduced Life Span* – Studies have shown that keeping a pet on the slender side of normal lived a median of 2.5 years longer than overweight pets.
- *Unwillingness to change to a better diet* – Due to a diet of treats and human food there is a likelihood the pet will not accept a diet designed for pets
- *Increased surgical and anaesthetic risk* – Obesity causes inaccuracies in drug dosing due to drugs calculated on lean pets, as well respiratory effects due to improper air exchange.
- *Heart Disease* – Overweight dogs tend to have high blood which can contribute to Congestive Heart Failure

Reasons as to why your pet maybe overweight:

- A cup of food depends on the cup being used; all cups are different. It is best to weigh the amount of food required and make marks on the cup.
- The guidelines on the packet are just guidelines. Monitor the pet and increase or decrease the amount fed. Feel free to come in and use our scales.
- Genetics – this can be that some pets are prone to obesity e.g. Golden Retrievers and Labradors.
- Treats from neighbours and children are hard to measure.
- Pet treats are often high in calories, and an extra 4-5 treats given daily can equate to an extra meal. Free feeding encourages more frequent feeding than is required, so meal feeding or specific timed feeding is better for calorie control

What can be done for your pet?

- Veterinary consultation to ensure no further health problems are present
- Often diet and exercise are the only changes needed.
- Feeding a prescription diet made specifically for your pet and ensuring this is the sole food given to your pet.
- Feed at given meal times.
- Regular weight checks with the clinic to ensure you are heading in the right direction down and not up in weight. We can refer you to our FREE “Waist Watchers” programme to help if necessary.
- Regular exercise for the pet, this can be anything from throwing a ball around for the pet to going for walks.