

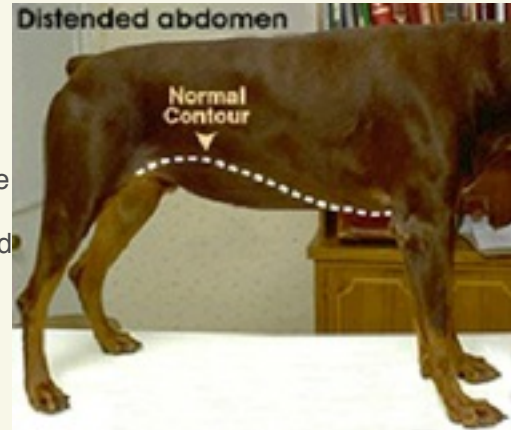
WEIGHT LOSS

Weight loss is tough for anyone - two- or four-legged! However, losing weight and getting in shape can add not only years to your pet's life, it can also make those extra years more enjoyable. Helping your cuddly canine to shed a few pounds may be easier than you think

Why should my pet lose weight?

As few as five pounds above the ideal body weight can put your pet at risk for developing some serious medical conditions. Unfortunately, when a pet is overweight or obese it no longer is a question of "if" your pet will develop a condition secondary to the excess weight but "how soon and how serious!" Some of the common disorders associated with excess weight include:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- Osteoarthritis (arthritis)
- Increased frequency of joint injuries
- High blood pressure
- Some forms of cancer - especially intra-abdominal cancers



Overweight and obese cats usually have shorter lives than their fitter, normal weight counterparts. Heavy pets tend to physically interact less with their families and are less energetic and playful. Because they tend to lie around more, it is easier to overlook early signs of illness, since we may attribute their lethargy to their "normal laziness."

How should I begin a weight loss program for my pet?

Theoretically, weight loss seems simple enough: fewer calories in + more calories out = weight loss. Unfortunately, it's not as simple as that. You should never put your pet on a diet without the assistance of your veterinary healthcare team. There may be an underlying medical condition that is causing or contributing to your pet's excess weight. Some common diseases associated with weight gain include hypothyroidism and hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease). These diseases, along with others, should be eliminated as possible causes or contributors to your pet's weight problem prior to beginning a diet. Too many pets start on a diet and fail to lose weight simply because the diet wasn't the problem - a disease was. Your veterinarian will perform a physical examination and recommend blood tests to ensure that there are no obstacles to weight loss for your pet.

Visit your regular full services veterinarian for nutrition recommendations. Some suggestions are:

Feed less of your pet's current diet

Gradually switch to a reduced calorie diet

Feed healthier snacks – carrots, broccoli, rice cakes

Exercise – increase walks and play time



