

The Dangers of Pet Obesity

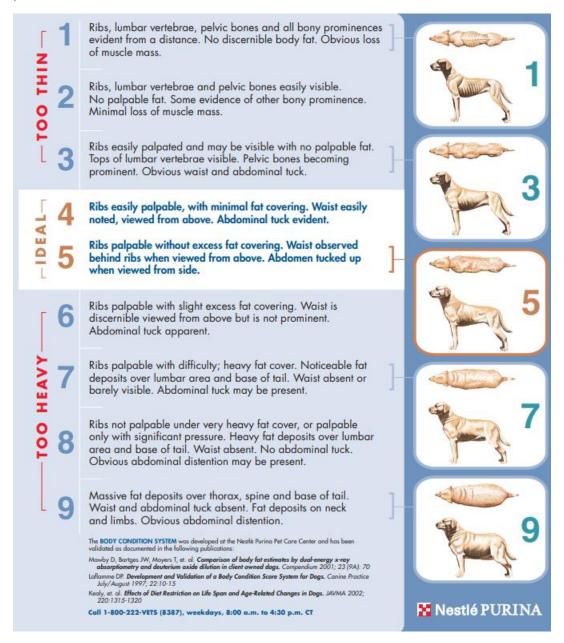
It is easy to be complacent about pet obesity. We love our pets no matter how they look; we might even think their "pudginess" is cute. Some of us show our affection towards our animals by giving them treats, lots of treats! Even though the subject of pet obesity seems secondary to other health topics, this is a major oversight. Obese pets are at a greater risk of several serious, sometimes deadly consequences.

Possible Consequences of Pet Obesity:

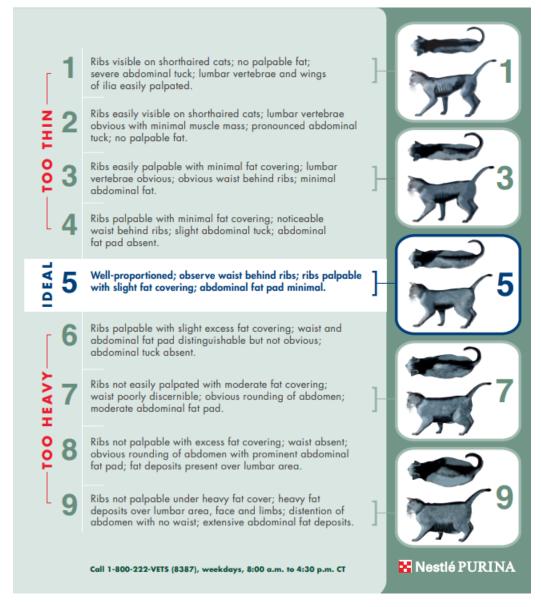
- Arthritis The heavier your pet is, the more strain is placed upon your pet's joints. This increased pressure causes the cartilage in joints to slowly deteriorate, creating a bone-on-bone grinding, which is painful.
- CCL Rupture The increased pressure on your pet's joints can also cause a rupture of
 the cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) located in your pet's knee, which is similar to the
 anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in humans. Surgery is the best treatment for these
 ruptures and is often very costly.
- Heart and Breathing Issues Overweight pets are at a higher risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. They are also more likely to have laryngeal paralysis and a collapsing trachea, which can cause significant trouble breathing.
- Higher Anesthetic Risk If your obese pet needs to be sedated or anesthetized, he/she
 is at a higher risk than healthy weight pets. The increased weight on your pet's chest
 makes it harder for them to breathe. Their heart also must work harder during
 anesthesia. Overweight pets take longer to recover from anesthesia too.
- Skin Problems Excessive "fat rolls" lead to moist skin pockets and bacteria and yeast infections. This is not only a stinky situation, but it also causes your pet to itch.
 Overweight pets cannot groom themselves effectively, causing their haircoat to look greasy or dull. They are also prone to fatty masses called lipomas, which can create a scare for owners since these masses can look and feel identical to cancerous tumors.
- Increased Risk of Cancer Obese pets are more likely to develop cancers such as mammary and bladder neoplasia.
- **Poorer Quality-of-Life** Overweight pets are tired more often and less likely to run and play with their toys.
- **Shortened Life Span** Obese pets live a shorter life. Obesity can take away two or more years from your pet's lifespan, which is super sad!



So, how do you know if your pet is overweight? At Ely Veterinary Care (EVC), we will weigh your pet, assign them a Body Condition Score (BCS), give you an ideal weight for your pet, and provide your pet with a daily calorie count. The BCS system ranges from 1-9 with a score of 1 being emaciated and a score of 9 being morbidly obese. The ideal BCS for your pet is a 5. Please reference the illustrations below for more information:







If your pet as been assigned a BCS of 6-9, don't fret! There are several things you can do to help your pet lose weight. Please see these weight loss tips below:

Weight Loss Tips:

Know your pet's ideal body weight, which is ______ lbs. You will want to start
feeding your pet based on their ideal body weight. You can either look at the back
of your pet's current food bag and refer to the feeding chart; on this chart, you will
find how may cups per day should be fed to your pet based on their ideal body



weight, **NOT** on their current body weight. For example, if your pet's ideal body weight is 50 lbs., but he/she is currently 70 lbs., you will find the 50 lb. range on the feeding chart and feed them the cups per day recommended for a 50 lb. dog.

Alternatively, you can take your pet's recommended calories per day, which is _____ kcals and find how may kcals per cup make up your pet's current diet. This number is usually seen as "kcals/cup" in small writing on the side or back of your pet's food bag. When you find how many kcals/cup are present in your pet's food, take your pet's recommended calories per day and divide it by the kcals/cup. The number you get will be how many cups per day your pet needs. For example, if we tell you that your pet needs to eat 300 calories or kcals per day, and you find that your pet's food contains 290 kcals/cup, then you should be feeding 1 cup per day to your pet (300/290 = 1.03).

- You can split your pet's allotted cups per day into two feedings. This helps to keep your pet full throughout the day. For example, if you are supposed to feed your pet 1.5 cups per day, you can split this amount into ¾ cup twice daily.
- Use an actual measuring cup to feed your pet. NOT a "scoop" or "drinking cup."
- Discontinue giving your pet canned food, treats, and human food.
- You can use your pet's daily allotted food amount as treats by taking out a few pieces of kibble from this amount and giving them to your pet during random times of the day as special "treats."
- Bring your pet to the clinic periodically for free "Happy Visits" where he/she can be weighed and petted so that we can track their weight loss journey.
- Exercise at home is also important! You can take your dog for daily walks or play with your cat using cat toys.

Please reach out to us for a nutrition or weight loss consult for your pet today!

* For additional pet weight loss resources, please follow this Hill's link: https://www.hillspet.com/products/weight-management-pet-food. The link to our online pharmacy for ordering your pet's recommended weight loss food can be found at: https://elyvetcarepllc.securevetsource.com/index.pml