

Obesity and Your Canine Pet

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among dogs today.

What is obesity?

Obesity is the storage of excess fat on your dog's body.

What causes obesity?

The main cause of obesity is excessive food/calorie intake combined with inadequate exercise. Other less likely causes of obesity are genetic predisposition and hormonal disorders.

What are the risks of obesity?

Arthritis, including deterioration of hip dysplasia

Ruptured cruciate ligaments in the stifles (knees)

Heart disease

Spinal problems, especially in Dachshunds

Impaired reproductive efficiency

Dyspnea, Fatigue, and Exercise intolerance

Metabolic problems; Hypothyroidism and Diabetes Mellitus

Shorter life span

Potential increased anesthesia and surgery risk

How can obesity be detected in dogs?

The best way to determine obesity in your dog is by putting your hands on your dog and evaluating its body condition (see enclosed pamphlet by Purina). The simplest rule of thumb for determining your dog's body condition is to be able to feel the ribs, but not see them. You should be able to see a waistline or hourglass figure when you view your dog from the side or above.

What can be done about obesity?

First, determine how much your dog gets to eat throughout the day, including any treats or table scraps. Then, follow these steps to start a weight loss program.

1. Decrease treats and table scraps; replace store bought treats and table scraps with fruits and vegetables. Carrots and apple slices are excellent choices.
2. Increase activity level; go for walks, play ball, encourage swimming.
3. Restrict your dog from the kitchen and dining table during meal times to avoid the temptation to give table scraps.
4. Consult your dog food bag for a recommendation on how much to feed your dog. Measure the amount you feed exactly, using an actual measuring cup.
5. Consider changing the food you feed to a lower calorie/fat food. Slowly introduce the new food over a period of a couple weeks by mixing it with the old food.

Remember, weight loss doesn't happen overnight and a target weight loss of 1-3 % of current body weight per week is very reasonable.

If you are very serious about weight loss in your dog, it is possible to calculate how much to feed your dog daily. Below is a table that shows you how many calories your dog should be fed to his/her weight in pounds. Find your dog's weight, the number next to it is the amount of calories a normal dog of that weight should eat a day. **(The following table is not for weight loss, but for weight management.)**

Weight in Pounds	Calories (Kcals) Management
5	98
10	166
15	234
20	303
25	371
30	439
35	507
40	575
45	673
50	728
55	782

60	835
65	887
70	937
75	987
80	1036
85	1089
90	1132
95	1179
100	1125
105	1271
110	1316
115	1360
120	1404
125	1448
130	1491
135	1534
140	1577

All dog foods are calculated, by the company who made it, to calories (Kcals) per cup of food. (This information can be found by looking on the bag of food, calling the company that makes the product, or by calling our clinic.) We have product guides of many name brand dog foods, and if we do not have the information for your food on hand, we can try to get the information for you.

After you have determined how many calories your dog should be fed and how many calories per cup of dog food you feed, you then calculate how many cups of food your dog should receive by dividing the total number of calories by the number of calories per cup.

Calories (Kcals) of some popular dog treats:

- Milk Bone, large 115
- T Bonz 45
- Purina One Beef Jerky Strips 37

- Snausages 33
- Beggin' Strips 30
- Pup-Peroni 20
- Nutro Max Mini Bones 19
- Alpo Variety Snaps 13
- Milk Bone, original 10

If you have any questions about weight loss with your dog please call the Country Veterinary Clinic at (231) 843-3213. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.