

Obesity In Your Pet

A vital factor in pet health



Obesity is a huge concern for our pets health. Without learning and understanding weight management in our pets we are leaving them at risk to many health consequences and potentially a shorter life span. Unfortunately, obesity is on the rise. It is up to pet owners and their veterinarian to manage this pet health epidemic.

Classifying Obesity

When your pet is seen by the veterinarian they will often give your pet a **body condition score (BCS)**. This is based off of the feel of your pet. Charts are available to help vets and owners decide on a score. Scores are out of 9 points.

- 1-3 are considered too thin
- 4-5 are ideal
- 6-9 is overweight - Obese

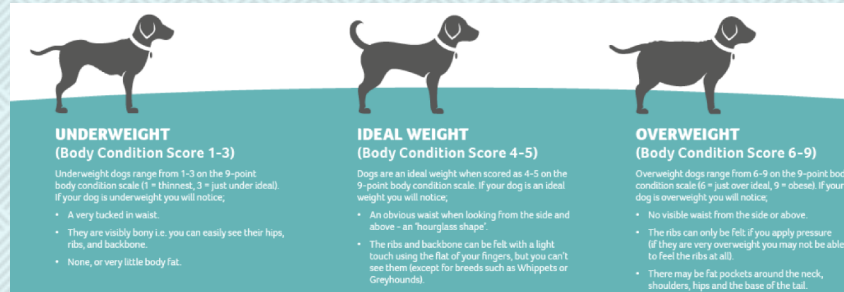


Image Courtesy of PDSA - The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals.

How Common is Obesity?

Statistics estimate that 59.5% of cats and 55.8% of dogs are overweight to obese (BCS 6-9) in the USA in 2018. Numbers are thought to be similar in Canada.



Consequences of Obesity

There are many serious consequences to an overweight pet. Pets who are overweight can live a much shorter life span but can also be at a higher risk of developing many diseases during their life which can be costly for owners and decrease a pet's quality of life.

Obesity is the #1 Health Threat Pets Face

shorter life span

chronic inflammation

respiratory disease

bone/joint diseases



metabolic disease



kidney disease



skin disease



Tips for body condition scoring at home.

4-5: Lay your hand flat and feel with your other hand along your knuckles.

6-9: feel the knuckles of your hand from the palm side. The excess tissue makes the knuckles harder to feel.

1-3: make a fist and feel the knuckles on the back of your hand. They are easy to feel.

Compare these to your dog's ribs to get a basic idea of your dog's BCS.

Managing Obesity

Overweight pets are often a result of overfeeding or lack of exercise.

- Speak with your vet to make sure your pet is getting the right amount of calories
- Use a measuring cup to make sure you are feeding the right amount of food
- Avoid feeding excess treats not accounted for in total daily calorie intake
- Add more walks or play to the daily schedule for your dog
- Consider different types of exercise (swimming, hiking, etc.)



For more Information visit: <https://petobesityprevention.org/>

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