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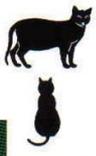


## Weight Loss

Animals eat for energy. Their diet must contain a balance of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals to satisfy basic nutritional needs. Some dogs and cats require more energy than others, depending on a variety of factors, including age, activity level, environment and lifestyle. The overweight dog is typically “less active”, therefore we must provide a diet meeting their special needs.

At Murray Bridge Veterinary Clinic we recommend feeding specific Hills Science Diets or Hills Prescriptions Diets to animals who are overweight. It provides a well balanced diet, with reduced calories, for the overall health and well-being of your pet. Vitamins and minerals and overall nutrition are not compromised when these diets for weight loss, compared to some other pet foods. Murray Bridge veterinary Clinic have a FREE Weight Loss Program - Please ask one of our staff for details.

## Body Condition Score

<b>1</b>	 	<p><b>Thin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribs, backbone and pelvic bones easily visible</li> <li>• No palpable fat</li> <li>• Narrow waist and abdominal tuck</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	 	<p><b>Underweight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backbone and ribs easily felt</li> <li>• Minimal fat covering</li> <li>• Obvious waist and abdominal tuck</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	 	<p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribs not visible but can be felt</li> <li>• Waist observed when viewed from above</li> <li>• Slight abdominal tuck</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	 	<p><b>Overweight</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribs can be felt, with excess fat covering</li> <li>• Slight waist, but not prominent</li> <li>• Abdomen slightly rounded</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	 	<p><b>Obese</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribs not easily felt, with heavy fat covering</li> <li>• Waist barely visible to absent</li> <li>• Abdomen rounded</li> </ul>

## Some weight loss tips

Feed several small meals throughout the day  
 Separate your pet when the family eats  
 Feed separately from other pets  
 Have one person responsible for feeding your pet  
 Feed meals only in your pet's bowl  
 Give your dog a smaller food bowl  
 Reduce or eliminate snacks or treats  
 Provide non-food related attention  
 Exercise your pet daily  
 Use a activity ball instead of a bowl for feeding & additional exercise

Since the proper weight of a dog and cat can vary within the breed, the most practical method is determining the present body condition of the animal and determining how it should look. This is performed by visual observation.

## **Legal Treats**

A major problem with any weight loss program is the issue of treats. It is always good to reward your dog and cat for good behaviour and a common reward is a food treat. In order to overcome this problem, it may be helpful to incorporate "legal snacks".

One common method is to use part of the daily allotment of food as snacks throughout the day. Place the daily allotment of food into a separate container in the morning, and give your dog or cat kibbles of this food as treats throughout the day. Try putting a portion of the food into an activity ball, this will keep your pet busy and provide incidental exercise.

Hills Pet Nutrition have some "healthy treat" options available and your weight loss nurse can advise if (and how many), your pet is allowed to eat.

## **Exercise**

Regular exercise is a critical factor in the weight loss process. The most important reason to exercise is to increase the pet's metabolism.

*Types of exercise:*

Daily walking, running or playing fetch and other games are recommended.

Swimming is also an excellent way to exercise your dog.

Feeding all food in a treat ball, which promotes movement, while keeping your dog busy.

Talking to the dog throughout the exercise period can help maintain its enthusiasm and attention.

Put a lead on your dog and walk to the mail box or to visit a friend up the road, every bit helps.

*Caution – START SLOWLY*

*Avoid overexertion.*

*Avoid strenuous exercise within one hour of feeding.*

*If you find it hard adjusting to exercise start small and build it up.*

*Avoid exercising during the hot, humid hours of the day.*

*Watch for signs of fatigue, such as shortness of breath, and slowing down or stopping.*

*Provide water for your dog as well as yourself.*

## **EXERCISE FOR THE CAT:**

Regular exercise is also important for cats, although it is more difficult it can be done.

**TYPES OF EXERCISE:**

Daily playing with toys of interest, and other cats if possible.

Feeding all food in a treat ball, which promotes movement, while hunting for food.

Promoting play when they would otherwise be sleeping.

Hang various toys for the cat to play with during the day when you are not around, and provide a scratching pole too.

Physical activity should begin at a low level because obese dogs and cats have little tolerance for exertion. Both the duration and the intensity of the exercise can be increased as your pet begins to lose weight and increases its exercise tolerance.

If you have any further questions please make an appointment with your Veterinarian or ask one of our friendly staff members.