

Weight Loss

Even if your pet is only a few pounds over its ideal weight, it's at higher risk for developing some serious medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoarthritis. Your veterinary team can help get your overweight pet back in shape!

Start with Calories

A weight-loss formula is simple: if your pet uses more calories than he consumes, he will lose weight. It's important to have a physical exam before starting a diet, in case there are any medical conditions that need to be addressed. The next step is calculating the calories your pet needs. To do this, your veterinarian will first determine your pet's ideal weight. A safe guideline is losing 3-5% of body weight per month. Using that target weight, your vet will figure out how many calories your pet should eat each day. Then, depending on which food you are feeding your pet, you can determine exactly how much food he needs each day.

Which Food Is Best?

Frequently, your pet will be able to continue eating his regular food, just in smaller portions or with different treats. Sometimes, your vet will recommend a "diet" food. "Diet" pet foods are complete and balanced but with fewer calories in each cup of food. A food like this will allow your pet to eat a more generous portion size. You and your team should discuss what will be the best fit for your pet. If your pet needs to lose a lot of weight, there are extra low calorie prescription foods available.

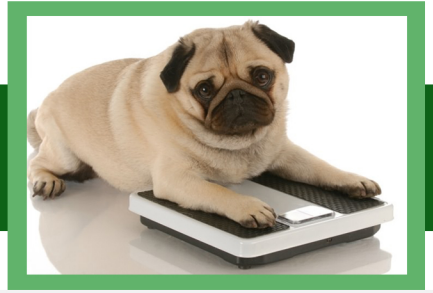
For Your Pet

Brand of food:

Total calories per day:

Meals per day:

Amount of food per meal:



Exercise

Being active will burn extra calories. Walking or playing with your pet is fun and good exercise. Talk with your vet about what exercise is appropriate for your pet.

How to Change Foods

Make the change gradually over several days to avoid stomach upset. If your pet refuses the food, try adding a small amount of chicken broth, fish oil, or ketchup.

Measuring Food

Be sure to measure your pet's food using a measuring cup for consistency- not Big Gulp cups or handfuls!

What About Treats?

If you will be feeding treats, be sure to include them in the calorie count! Low calorie options include plain cheerios, carrots (cooked or raw), apple, banana, green beans, small bites of salmon or fish, or small bites of cooked lean meat like chicken breast.