

OBESITY/WEIGHT CONTROL

Why Is Obesity Important?

- Obesity is not cute. It's a disease. Any animal whose body weight is 15% or more than it should be suffers from obesity. It is important because it predisposes to so many other diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, heat intolerance, fatty liver, increased surgical/ anaesthetic risk, decreased resistance to common diseases and slower recovery from illness.
- Thus obesity in pets carries health risks just as in humans. In animals, however, the risks are concentrated into a much shorter life span.
- Obesity is a completely curable condition which is completely in the hands of the person who feeds the animal. By helping your pet lose a few kilograms, you can help it live a longer, healthier and happier life.
- Although obesity is influenced by genetic make-up, metabolic rate, hormone effects, behaviour and character, studies show that the majority of obesity in animals is due to the over-consumption of calories in relation to their energy needs. In other words, your pet is eating too much and not getting enough exercise!

Dealing with Obesity:

- Accept that you are killing your pet when you overfeed. Every extra calorie is shortening your pet's life. The whole family, including children and domestic helpers need to be aware of the importance of your pet's diet.
- Some clinical conditions such as diabetes and thyroid disease are associated with obesity. Have your vet examine your pet before starting a weight reduction program.
- Place your pet onto an appropriate weight reduction diet. Your vet can advise you which diet is most suitable for your animal. This might be a commercially available diet, or in more severe cases, a prescription diet which your vet can provide. A weight reduction diet contains reduced calories, but correct concentrations of essential proteins and fatty acids, minerals and vitamins. If you attempt to treat obesity by feeding reduced amounts of a normal diet you may cause deficiency diseases in your pet.
- Be careful not to overdo the weight loss! Aim for your pet to lose 0.5% of body weight per week up to a maximum of 2%. Take extra care with cats, as they are at risk of developing fatty liver disease (hepatic lipidosis) if their weight is reduced too quickly.
- CARE with treats. This is the greatest cause of obesity, and of failure to lose weight. Give healthy, low calorie treats if you must, such as small pieces of carrots or boiled/steamed chicken, but make sure to cut down on the amount fed at meal time afterwards.
- If your pet is a fast eater and woofs down their food consider investing in an interactive, slow feeder such as those made by Northmate (<http://northmate.com/category/products/green/>).
- It is better to feed 2-3 small meals a day. This increases the metabolic rate, and so increases the rate of weight loss.
- ONLY give water to drink. It is a common misconception that cats need milk, in fact dairy products can cause gastro-intestinal disease in many cats.
- Provide non-food related attention – more exercise and more games.
- Ask your veterinary surgeon for a target weight, and monitor your pet's weight weekly. This will give you an idea of progress, and the motivation to keep going. It will also provide the basis for your vet to give further advice. Be committed to the weight loss program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONSULT YOUR VETERINARY SURGEON

癡肥及體重控制

癡肥有什麼問題？

- 癡肥絕非可愛，實情是一種疾病！任何動物的體重如高於其理想體重 15% 即患上癡肥。癡肥的動物罹患其他疾病的風險頗高，例如：糖尿病、心臟病、高血壓、風濕關節炎、中暑、脂肪肝、增加麻醉及手術風險、抵抗力下降、患病後癒合能力減弱。
- 癡肥對人類和動物身體造成相同的傷害。然而動物的壽命較短，因此癡肥的影響會更早浮現。
- 癡肥完全可以治癒，重點在於主人餵飼的食物種類和份量。主人幫助動物瘦身，同時能使動物更健康、愉快和長壽。
- 癡肥受基因、新陳代謝速率、賀爾蒙、行為性格等影響，然而研究顯示最大的原因是卡路里攝取量比身體需要為高。簡而言之即是運動太少，飲食太多。

如何應對？

- 作為主人必須明白過度餵食會間接殺害動物。每個多餘的卡路里均減短寵物的壽命。因此每一位家庭成員，包括小朋友及家務助理都應遵從正確的餵飼方式。
- 癡肥可受不同的因素影響，包括糖尿病及甲狀腺問題等。在減肥前，應帶寵物予獸醫檢查以排除其他健康問題。
- 開展減肥計劃。主人宜徵詢獸醫建議選擇合適的食糧，選擇包括市面出售的貓狗糧，或是獸醫專用的處方糧。減肥糧通常含較少卡路里，但有足夠身體所需的蛋白質、脂肪、礦物質和維他命。如果主人只扣減動物的平常食糧以達減肥效果，可導致營養失衡的疾病。
- 減肥不宜操之過急。減肥目標是每周約 0.5% 體重，不應多於 2%。貓隻減肥需尤其小心，體重下降太急可引發脂肪肝。
- 零食是肥胖的主因和減肥的大忌。若因特別需要必須餵飼零食，主人應選健康低卡路里的，例如一小片的紅蘿蔔或去皮蒸雞柳。另外需略減正餐的份量。
- 若寵物進食時習慣狼吞虎嚥，可考慮購置特別設計的餵食器如 Northmate 出品的 Green (<http://northmate.com/category/products/green/>)。
- 每天分 2-3 次餵飼可增加新陳代謝及減肥速度。
- 只餵清水。很多主人以為貓隻需要喝奶，然而奶產品容易導致腸胃不適
- 多運動，多跟動物玩耍。
- 向獸醫查詢目標體重，並每周量度體重。主人可藉此了解減肥進度，有助推動計劃。獸醫亦可掌握進展，協助主人微調計劃。

欲知道更多有關詳情，可請教你的獸醫