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WEIGHT LOSS INFORMATION SHEET

Weight loss diets

There are a wide range of reasons that our pets may become a little bigger than they should be. It is important to help our pets stay at their ideal weight throughout their life to reduce the risk of other health conditions e.g. joint diseases, heart issues and illnesses such as diabetes. In some cases, we may recommend a weight loss diet to help your pet shed their extra pounds.

Why can't I just reduce the amount they eat?

For some of our pets reducing the amount they are fed, or cutting out treats and human foods, can be enough to get them to their ideal weight. But this method doesn't work for all pets. Some pets that are struggling to lose weight, or have a lot of weight to lose, need a more balanced approach. In these cases we would recommend a weight loss diet.

What is a weight loss diet?

Weight loss diets are complete foods designed specifically to support you pet with weight loss. As well as being low in calorie they often have other benefits:

- **High in insoluble fibre:** This helps 'bulk' the food. Adding insoluble fibre can help with your pet's satiety. This means that they will feel fuller for longer and therefore feel less need to eat more than their daily amount.
- **Antioxidants:** these help with the bodies overall health during weight loss.
- **'Superfoods':** many weight loss diets will include extracts and ingredients which help with things such as appetite suppression. They can also improve metabolism (the way your pets body uses and stores nutrients).
- **L-carnitine:** L-carnitine helps with fat burn and helps to maintain lean body mass as well.
- **Nutritional supplements:** some foods will contain things to help with health issues that are commonly affected by weight issue. The most common one is joint supplements such as glucosamine. This is to help care for your pets overall health as well as reduce their weight.

These additions and changes to the diet compared to a normal maintenance diet ensure effective weight loss whilst still providing a balanced and complete diet.

There are several weight loss specific diets available these are:

- Virbac HPM weight loss & control range
- Hills metabolic range
- Royal Canin satiety range
- Dechra specific weight reduction range.
- Purina pro plan OM obesity management range
- Calibra diabetes and obesity range

At Greenbay we stock Virbac HPM, but some of the other diets are available to order. *Speak to a member of our team about diets available*

What about light diets?

Light diets are usually a low calorie, high fibre version of the same brands normal diet. They often lack the additional benefits usually found in weight loss specific diets. For some pets they are a good alternative. But for many pets a weight loss specific diet is still more suitable. Weight loss is generally slower when using these diets in comparison to diets designed specifically for weight loss.

Weight management clinics

Here at Greenbay we offer weight and nutrition clinics, with RVN Laura Sproul, who has her nursing certificate in small animal nutrition. These clinics allow us to discuss with you the best weight loss plan for your pet. Laura will weigh and assess your pet and then discuss with you diet options. She can also provide you with tips on how best to help your pet lose weight.

Tips and tricks for weight loss.

- **Weigh food.** Weighing food daily creates a consistent feeding plan. By weighing the food every time you feed your pet it allows you to ensure they are having the right amount of food every time.
- **Puzzle feeders.** Puzzle feeders are a great way of not only making feeding times last longer so making your pet feel less hungry. They also keep your pet active helping them to use up energy and prevent further weight gain.
- **Replace training treats.** Taking a handful of kibbles out of your pet's daily allowance and using it as treats prevents your pet from having any extras that might affect their weight loss.

Body condition scoring

Weighing your pet regularly can be difficult to do. An easy way to ensure your pet is the right shape is to perform a body condition score, your vet or nurse will often do this at your pet's appointments, but it is also something that can easily be done by you. The guides below show how to body condition score your dog and cat.



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Body Condition Score



UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

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Joussier L, et al. Effect of breed on body composition and comparison between various methods to estimate body composition in dogs. *Res Vet Sci* 2010;88:207-210.
Kealy RD, et al. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *JAMA* 2002;288:1315-1320.
Lafamme DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Canine Pract* 1997;20:10-15.

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Body Condition Score



UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs very easily seen on short-haired cats. No fat pads present. Severe abdominal tuck. Lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily seen and felt.
- 2 Ribs easily seen on short-haired cats. Lumbar vertebrae obvious. Pronounced abdominal tuck. No fat pads present.
- 3 Ribs easily felt with minimal fat covering. Lumbar vertebrae obvious. Obvious waist behind ribs. Minimal abdominal fat pads.
- 4 Ribs felt with minimal fat covering. Noticeable waist behind ribs. Slight abdominal tuck. Minimal abdominal fat pads.

IDEAL

- 5 Well-proportioned. Ribs felt with slight fat covering. Waist seen behind ribs, but not pronounced. Abdominal fat pad minimal.

OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs felt with slight excess fat covering. Waist and abdominal fat pad present but not obvious. Abdominal tuck absent.*
- 7 Ribs not easily felt through moderate fat covering. Waist not easily seen. Slight rounding of abdomen may be present. Moderate abdominal fat pad.
- 8 Ribs not felt due to excess fat covering. Waist absent. Obvious rounding of abdomen with prominent abdominal fat pad. Fat deposits present over lower back area.
- 9 Ribs not felt under heavy fat cover. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, face and limbs. Distention of abdomen with no waist means abdominal fat deposits.

Bjornvad CR, et al. Evaluation of a nine-point body condition scoring system in physically inactive pet cats. *AJVR* 2011;72:433-437.
Lafamme DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for cats: A clinical tool. *Feline Pract* 1997;25:13-18.
Teng KT et al. Strong associations of 9-point body condition scoring with survival and Blegpan in cats. *J Feline Med Surg* 2018;20(12):1110-1118. DOI: 10.1177/1098122X17752198

*A body condition score of 6/9 may be acceptable in some cats, especially older cats.

