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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.

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

Our nurses provide complimentary weight management clinics. These clinics allow us to discuss with you the best weight loss plan for your pet. They will weigh and assess your pet and then discuss with you diet options. They can also provide you 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.
- **Replace training treats.** Taking a handful of kibble 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
- **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.

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 on the next page show how to body condition score your dog and cat.

For further information please speak to a member of our team.








CAT SIZE-O-METER

- Your pet is a healthy weight
- Seek advice about your pet's weight
- Seek advice as your pet could be at risk

PLEASE NOTE

There are some cases where the natural shape of a cat may mean this simple system doesn't translate as easily. For example, if your cat has a long coat it may be difficult to judge the shape. There are also some breeds of cats, such as Maine Coon, that are generally larger than the average moggie - however they should still have the same body shape. If you need help using this chart, please take it to your vet or pet care professional for advice.

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Size-O-Meter Score:	Characteristics:
1 VERY THIN More than 20% below ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones are very easily seen (in short haired pets) Pronounced waist Obvious loss of muscle mass with no belly fat
2 THIN Between 10-20% below ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones easily seen Obvious waist Very little belly fat
3 IDEAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones easily felt Visible waist A small amount of belly fat
4 OVERWEIGHT 10-15% above ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones are hard to feel No defined waist Slightly sagging belly
5 OBESE More than 15% above ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones extremely difficult to feel under a padding of fat No waist can be seen Heavy fat pads on lower back and an obvious sagging belly - skin rolls may sway from side to side when walking

Derived from BCSC validated by Lathorne DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for cats. A clinical trial. *Feline Practice* 1997; 25:13-17
 Lathorne DP, Hume E, Harrison J. Evaluation of zoologic measures as an assessment of body composition of dogs and cats. *Compendium* 2001;23(suppl 9A):68








DOG SIZE-O-METER

- Your pet is a healthy weight
- Seek advice about your pet's weight
- Seek advice as your pet could be at risk

PLEASE NOTE

There are some cases where the natural shape of a dog may mean this simple system doesn't translate as easily. For example, Whippets and Greyhounds tend to have lean physiques while a Staffie will have a broader shape. A Bichon Frisé will have a nice fluffy coat for you to contend with. If you need help using this chart, please take it to your vet or pet care professional for advice.

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Size-O-Meter Score:	Characteristics:
1 VERY THIN More than 20% below ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones are very easily seen (in short haired pets) Obvious loss of muscle bulk No fat can be felt under the skin
2 THIN Between 10-20% below ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones easily seen Obvious waist and abdominal tuck Very little fat can be felt under the skin
3 IDEAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones easily felt Visible waist with an abdominal tuck A small amount of fat can be felt
4 OVERWEIGHT 10-15% above ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones are hard to feel Waist barely visible with a broad back Layer of fat on belly and at base of tail
5 OBESE More than 15% above ideal body weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs, spine and hip bones extremely difficult to feel under a thick layer of fat No waist can be seen and belly may droop significantly Heavy fat pads on lower back and at the base of the tail

Derived from BCSC validated by Keely, et al. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age related changes in dogs. *AVMA* 2002.
 Lathorne DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Canine Practice* July/August 1997; 22:10-15
 Vawter D, Bartges JW, Moyers J et al. Comparison of body fat estimates by dual energy x-ray absorptiometry and cadaverium axial diffusion in client owned dogs.