

plump pets

Does your pet need to **slim down?**

An estimated 54% of cats and dogs in the U.S. are overweight or **obese**, according to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention. Unfortunately, many pet owners don't even realize their animals are an unhealthy weight. Being obese can introduce a host of health risks for your pets. For the same reasons people often need to slim down, so do your pets.



Work with your veterinarian on a weight-loss plan for your pet.

Your veterinarian can customize a weight loss program for your pet that includes diet and exercise, as well as a realistic weight loss goal of 0.5 percent to 2 percent of body weight per week to start. This exam may also include blood testing to check for underlying conditions, including hormonal diseases that may make it difficult for your pet to lose weight.

Change your pet's eating habits.

For some pets, feeding a measured, prescribed amount of food may be all it takes to lose weight. Eliminating table scraps and reducing high-calorie treats will go a long way in your pet's weight loss and overall health. Good-for-you treats to give your dog include air-popped popcorn, green beans, carrots or commercial low-calorie dog treats.

Exercise with your pet regularly.

While reducing calorie intake, be sure you also help your pet burn more calories. Regular walks and play time help both you and your pet burn calories. Gradually increase the length and intensity of walks, and introduce new games to get your pet moving, such as playing with a laser pointer.

Get the whole family involved.

A big factor in the success of a weight reduction program is getting all members of the household involved. All family members should commit to helping your pet lose weight by eliminating table scraps and being active with your pet. You and your family will get in shape right along with your pet!

If all else fails, talk to your veterinarian.

If these simple solutions don't help, there are special diet foods available for dogs and cats that may help. Your veterinarian can also prescribe medication that can help your pet lose weight. See the pet health expert, your veterinarian, for more information on how you and your pet can live a healthier, happier life.

Overweight and obese pets are at risk for a number of health problems, including:

**health
RISKS**

Osteoarthritis, insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart and respiratory disease, cranial cruciate ligament injury, kidney disease, many forms of cancer, and decreased life expectancy (up to 2.5 years)

