

HOT TOPIC

Maintaining healthy weight



ADIPOSE CELLS



In focus

Maintaining a healthy weight in pets provides many health advantages, but many pet owners are uncertain about how to manage their pet's weight.

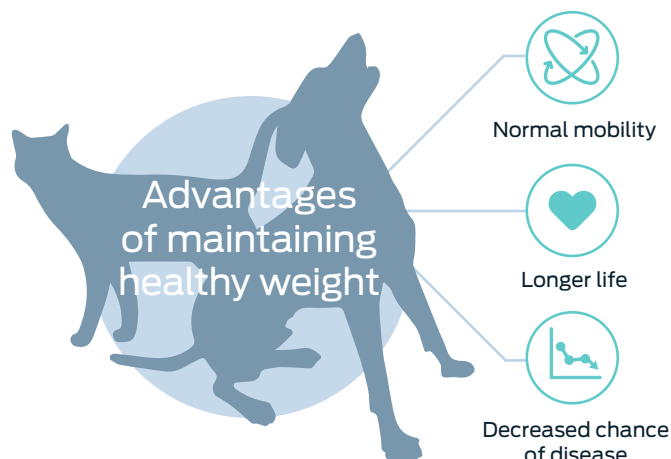
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How do I keep my pet at a healthy weight?

Globally, it is estimated that up to 59% of pet cats and dogs are overweight.¹ It can be a challenge for pets to lose excess weight, so it is important that owners do what they can to prevent weight gain. This can be accomplished by regularly monitoring the pet's body condition and weight,² engaging them in physical activity,³ and then adjusting their energy (caloric) intake as needed.



How much should I feed my pet so they can maintain a healthy weight?

One of the easiest ways to maintain healthy weight in pets is by monitoring their energy or caloric intake. If a pet is consuming more calories than they are burning, they will likely gain weight. All dogs and cats should be fed a diet that meets the needs of the pet's life stage (i.e., early-life, adult, or senior years). The feeding guidelines on pet food labels are a starting point. Since all pets have individual needs, owners should monitor weight, body condition, and activity level, and then adjust feeding amounts if their pet gains or loses weight.



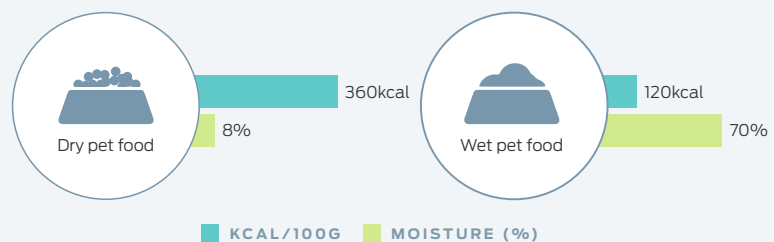
How can I increase my pet's activity level?

Physical activity is important for pets to maintain a healthy weight.⁵ Pets that are more active are less likely to put on excess weight.⁶ Promoting physical activity via walks, play, toys, hydrotherapy, or outdoor access is beneficial to both the pet and the owner.³ Pets that have limited or no access to the outdoors are more likely to be overweight.⁷⁻¹¹ These pets should be provided plenty of indoor activity when possible.³

Is dry food or wet food linked to weight gain?

The decision to feed wet or dry food is up to owner preference, but the type of food does not influence weight gain. Weight gain is influenced by the amount of calories a pet consumes. Because wet foods are over 70% water, a larger volume can be fed to meet the pet's caloric needs. Dry foods, on the other hand, contain less water than wet foods, making them higher in calories per gram of food fed. Ultimately, both wet and dry foods are nutritious options for pets as long as they are consuming the right amount of calories to meet their daily energy needs.

Average difference in calorie and moisture content between wet and dry pet foods.¹²



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