



## Obesity in pets

It is often difficult for us to see that our pet is overweight, especially as we see them every day. Often obesity is only noticed when the problem is advanced, or when a vet points it out when visiting for another problem or yearly booster. Obesity in our pets is unfortunately an extremely common problem and can seriously damage your pet's health in the long term.

### How can I tell if my pet is obese?

There are several ways to check if your pet is obese. Scoring systems are often used to place pets on a scale, often from low to high risk. There are two types commonly used, one is the Body Condition Score, and the other is the Body Fat Index, both of which involve palpating the pet's body. A vet or veterinary nurse can show you how to score your pets on either scale.

### But my pet hardly eats anything!

Many overweight animals will only eat small amounts. It does not take much food for an obese animal to maintain its weight, especially if it is doing relatively little exercise to burn off the calories.

### What future problems could my pet get if it is obese?

Obesity can make it more likely for a dog to suffer from several medical conditions. These include arthritis, heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and skin problems, and can significantly reduce the life span of an animal.

### What can I do to help my pet lose weight?

There are two ways to lose weight, which are to increase the amount of exercise and reduce calorie intake.

- Exercise - obese pets have less energy and are less willing to exercise. Regular exercise (even when it is raining!) will help, and this should be gradually increased with time. As pets lose weight, they start to enjoy it more and be more willing to exercise. Playtime with toys should be encouraged as this is also a good form of exercise. All this should be used alongside a calorie-controlled diet

- Diet - A calorie-controlled diet is important for weight loss. Reducing a pet's food intake by one third of what it normally gets, in most cases, should permit steady weight loss if on an appropriate diet. It is important that the pet loses weight steadily and not too quickly. Cutting down treats goes a long way towards weight loss. Treats are meant as treats not as a regular part of daily life.

## Facts

- Feeding your dog one small biscuit is the equivalent of a human eating a hamburger (based on a 10kg dog)
- Feeding your cat a cup of milk is the equivalent of a human eating 4.5 hamburgers.
- A dog gaining 1kg (2.2lb) in weight is the equivalent of a human gaining 6k (13lb).

## Lanes Vets Locations & Contact Information.

<p><b>Lanes Vets Garstang</b></p> <p>Leachfield Industrial Estate, Green Lane West, Garstang, Lancashire PR3 1PR.</p>	<p>Telephone. 01995 603 349</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:garstang@lanesvets.com">garstang@lanesvets.com</a></p>
<p><b>Lanes Vets Lancaster</b></p> <p>Units 4 - 5 Lake Enterprise Court, Ladies Walk, Caton Road, Lancaster LA1 3NX.</p>	<p>Telephone. 01524 67777</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:lancaster@lanesvets.com">lancaster@lanesvets.com</a></p>
<p><b>Lanes Vets Poulton</b></p> <p>235 Garstang Road East, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 8JH.</p>	<p>Telephone. 01253 891 088</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:poulton@lanesvets.com">poulton@lanesvets.com</a></p>

The information contained within this factsheet and the Lanes Vets website is provided by qualified, practicing professionals in good faith. The information is not intended to replace the advice of your own veterinarian nor should persons use this information as a basis for diagnosis of any animal(s).