



MARSDEN

Keep Your Dog Fit and Healthy

A Marsden Weighing Group Guide

www.marsden-weighing.co.uk



While the obesity epidemic amongst humans is well documented - recent World Obesity Day statistics revealed it's costing the NHS £5bn a year - one fact has been overlooked by many: our pets are getting fatter, too.

A recent survey by Marsden revealed that 58% of pets seen by vets are classed as overweight. This was further confirmation of the pet obesity crisis after a 2015 PDSA report revealed that one in three dogs in the UK are overweight.

Pet obesity can cause joint problems, arthritis, diabetes, digestive disorders and heart disease - and as well as affecting your pet's happiness and well-being, it means your veterinary bills can spiral too. But how do you know if your pet is overweight - and what can you do to keep your pooch at a perfect size? This free guide will help you.

What the vets say...

Some of the most worrying consequences of obesity in pets are:

- **Osteoarthritis**
- **Diabetes**
- **Cardiac disease**
- **Brachycephalic syndrome**

Elizabeth McLennan-Green,
Springfield Veterinary Hospital





Is my dog overweight?

If you don't know your dog's weight (if you do, you can refer to the chart at the back of this guide to determine whether your dog is overweight or not) there are a few tell-tale signs that will suggest they may be overweight.

These are:

- **A bigger and rounder face:** If your dog's features are visibly more rounded, it could be they have put weight on. If, like most pet owners, you have numerous pictures of your dog, compare old pictures with new.
- **Ribs:** This is the easiest way to tell. You should be able to easily feel the ribs, with only a little flesh between your fingers when you pinch the skin.
- **A reluctance to go for walks:** Does your dog have trouble walking, and seem unenthusiastic when it comes to walk time? Difficulty walking is a clear sign they are carrying too much weight.
- **Easily getting out of breath:** Does your dog pant heavily even after walking a relatively short distance? You may particularly notice this in the summer months.
- **Frequently being tired or sleeping a lot:** Dogs like to sleep, but should not sleep for any more than 12-14 hours per day. If your dog is napping constantly, they could be overweight.
- **They don't have an obvious waist:** Look at your dog from the side and from above. Does their body go in between their ribs and hips? If not, they are carrying too much weight.

What the vets say...

"80% of the cats and dogs we see are overweight."

Lucy Mapplebeck, Donnington Grove Vets

"Most people do not understand what a healthy weight looks like."

Shula Berg, CVS Vets





How does obesity affect your dog's health?

By allowing your dog to become overweight, you can severely impact on your dog's life. Obesity can lead to:

- **A reduced lifespan:** Dogs that do not have a healthy diet live less than those that do, evidence has shown.
- **Breathing issues and heart problems:** As fat can build up inside the dog's chest it can make breathing much harder and increase blood pressure.
- **Increased diabetes risk:** The dog's body becomes more resilient to hormone insulin due to the large stores of fat - this makes it more difficult to regulate levels of blood glucose and subsequently leads to diabetes.
- **Problems with joints:** Excessive body weight creates increased stress on the dog, which can increase the risk of ligament rupture and arthritis.
- **A lessened desire to exercise:** If the dog is overweight their normal life is compromised. They may have difficulty getting up from a lying down position. A reluctance to exercise may make the pet more lethargic and in turn make them more prone to gaining further weight.
- **Increased cancer risk:** Breast, Ovarian and prostate cancers are all linked to obesity in pets.
- **Increased risk of skin disease:** When the dog is overweight it has extra skin folds, which can cause irritation. This can lead to an increase in scratching, body odour and skin redness.
- **Heat stroke risk:** Hyperthermia occurs when the dog's body cannot cope with excessive external heat - with obesity being a major cause.

Further reading...

Reluctance to exercise:

<https://www.naturediet.co.uk/news/national-pet-obesity-awareness-day>

Skin disease consequence of pet obesity:

<http://www.pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health/dog-diet-nutrition/7-reasons-why-dog-obesity-dangerous>

Cancer risk of pet obesity:

<http://jn.nutrition.org/content/136/7/1940S.full>





What factors contribute to pet obesity?

If your dog is eating too much, eating unhealthily or not exercising enough, the energy from food gets stored as fat. There are other factors that play a role too - notably age, sex, environment, lifestyle, whether it is neutered and disease that the pet may have.

Exercise

It is important that your dog gets enough exercise so that calories from foods consumed can be burned off - this can help prevent digestive problems. On the other hand, less active dogs use fewer calories and may be more likely to eat if they are bored or stressed.

Diet

Feeding fatty foods or too much food generally can lead to weight gain. This can occur if your pet receives too many regular treats, you mistake attention for hunger, fail to weight out pet food or your pet eats from another pet's bowl.

Age

As your dog gets older they are likely to become less active. If they are eating the same amount of food and exercising less, they are going to put on weight.

Neutering

After a dog is neutered, their metabolic rate decreases and energy they require falls too. Weight may increase too if diet isn't adapted as a result.

Breed

Research has shown that some breeds are more susceptible to weight gain and obesity than others. The breeds to keep a close eye on include Labrador Retrievers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Cocker Spaniels and Beagles.

Lifestyle & Personality

Dogs that live with other dogs may tend to eat more; whereas dogs that live without other dogs tend to be spoiled with more treats. Personality also plays a part - some dogs only eat what they need, others are fussy and some eat anything they are given.

What the vets say...

"Pet obesity is a tricky topic to tackle with owners as often they don't feel there is a problem, and it can be difficult to get them to understand the nasty consequences of obesity in their pet. There is often a strong emotional association with feeding and owners 'feel bad' not treating them.

"Obesity in dogs is entirely down to the owner - and many owners do not take responsibility on portion size."

Anita Dowe, Abivale Vets





How can you manage a dog's weight?

What do you need to do to manage a dog's weight? This step-by-step guide is here to help:

Step 1: Assess your pet

If you suspect that your pet is overweight, visiting your vet will be able to provide a conclusive answer. The vet will weigh your pet on weighing scales and be able to complete a full assessment too, in order to determine any medical conditions etc.

Step 2: Create a plan

Next, work with your vet to create a suitable weight loss programme. This may include changing the type of food your dog eats, the quantities and the regularities - as well as a plan for treats and exercise. It's important that your vet is consulted before any changes are made, as these can be harmful to your pet. Weighing pet food can also help with diet control (see next page).

Step 3: Set pet weight goals

Working with your vet, you can determine a realistic weight loss goal, to be achieved in a realistic time period. For example the goal could be to lose 1-2% of their body weight each week.

Step 4: Ask about additional support

Your veterinary practice may also be able to offer other services, like access to a weight reduction support group. The Marsden blog is also a great place to find top tips to reduce your pet's weight.

Step 5: Keep a record

Over time, you can evaluate your pet's weight, their food intake and level of exercise which has been undertaken. From here, you will be able to see what areas of the plan needs adjusting.

What the vets say...

"Pets should be weighed by default whenever they visit the vet."

Richard, West Bar Vets

"When we are contacted by an owner with a pet obesity-issue, we recommend a free weight clinic. The vet will weigh and measure your pet, discuss diet and portion size - and also go over exercise and healthy treats."

Anita Dowe, Abivale Vets

Three top tips from a vet

- 1) **Know the correct portion size for your dog's weight**
- 2) **Weigh out their daily ration consistently everyday**
- 3) **Be 'treat-wise' - because every treat adds up**

Anita Dowe, Abivale Vets





How should you control food consumption?

Weighing pet food is a great way to ensure your dog is getting a good diet. The British Small Animal Veterinary Association has encouraged weighing out pet food to prevent overfeeding.

Determining the correct size of meals depends on the food type, the regularity of the meals, the size of the dog, their metabolic rate, and the amount of exercise they receive. Here's a step-by-step guide to weighing your pet's food:

Step 1: Look at the food label. This will provide information on the amount of pet food which is suitable to eat - this is usually broken down by the weight of the dog.

Step 2: The amount - unless stated otherwise - will be the total recommended per 24 hours, so divide the amount per the number of meals you are providing (usually two).

Step 3: Consider other factors - such as how energetic your dog is - and adjust the amount accordingly. For example, a hyperactive dog should receive more food than an inactive dog of the same breed.

Step 4: Then weigh out your pet food and provide your pet with a suitable quantity.

Step 5: Over time, you can monitor your pet's weight and change the amount of food if required.

What the vets say...

"Would we recommend owners weigh out pet food? Absolutely. Biscuits can fall differently into a cup each time you fill it and these extra grams will add up very quickly."

- Anita Dowe, Abivale Vets

"Negligence to pet food feeding guidelines is the main factor contributing to obesity in pets. A well balanced, weighed out, controlled diet is my number one tip to ensure your dog is a healthy weight."

- Elizabeth McLennan-Green,
Springfield Veterinary Hospital





Top 10 tips to reduce pet obesity

If you need even more help to ensure your pet does not become overweight or achieves weight loss goals, try these top 10 tips:

Tip 1: Make sure weight loss is done in a gradual way. It's more difficult to maintain a diet in the longer-term if the changes are too far from your dog's original diet and exercise routine and they'll struggle to adapt.

Tip 2: You can reduce calorie intake in two ways: 1) feed them less food or 2) serve them food which is low in fat.

Tip 3: Foods such as grapes, raisins, onions, chocolate and some artificial sweeteners can be poisonous to your dog.

Tip 4: Scraps from the table are often fatty and high in calories so will not help your dog to lose weight. The most fatty foods can upset your dog's stomach so should be avoided.

Tip 5: Food which is high in protein and fibre - but low in fat - is recommended for weight loss. As well as providing your dog with energy, these goods also mean they feel full for longer.

Tip 6: Your vet may recommend a diet which is supplemented with extra nutrients to keep your dog healthy - as well as other ingredients which mean they feel full despite eating less calories.

Tip 7: Dogs are creatures of habit, so are sometimes reluctant to try new foods - so it is recommended the diet is introduced over a seven day time period.

Tip 8: Weigh out your pet food because guessing the correct amount is unreliable - it is more than likely you will be overly generous with the amount you provide. The best way to weigh is use electronic weighing scales, like the B-100 from Marsden.

Tip 9: If your dog has food available to them at all hours of the day, they are likely to eat more food than those who are fed fixed amounts at regular times each day.

Tip 10: Do not feed your dog too late in the day, as they will not burn as many calories when sleeping at night - this can lead to weight gain.

What the vets say...

"To ensure your pet is a healthy weight, our top tip is to ensure they checked by a vet at least every six months."

Shula Berg, CVS Vets





Average Pet Weight by Breed

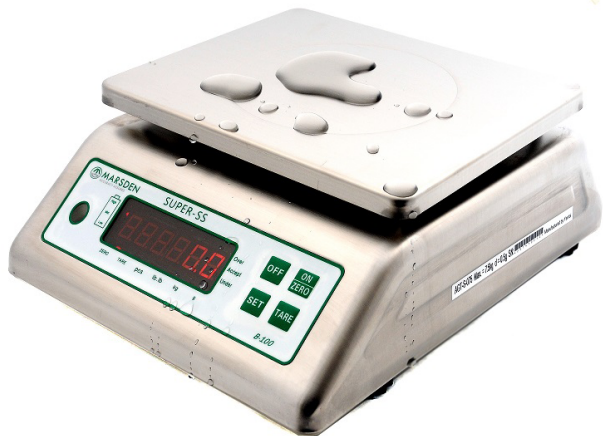
Selected Breeds	Average Adult Male Weight (lbs)	Average Adult Male Weight (kg)	Average Adult Female Weight (lbs)	Average Adult Female Weight (kg)
Boxer	65 - 80lbs	29 - 37kg	50 - 65lbs	22 - 30kg
Bulldog	50lbs	22kg	40lbs	18kg
Chihuahua	3 - 8lbs	1 - 4kgs	3 - 8lbs	1 - 4kg
Cocker Spaniel	24 - 34lbs	10 - 16kg	24 - 32lbs	10 - 15kg
Collie	60 - 75lbs	27 - 35kg	60 - 65lbs	27 - 30kg
Dalmatian	40 - 60lbs	18 - 28kg	40 - 60lbs	18 - 28kg
German Shepherd	75 - 95lbs	34 - 44kg	75 - 95lbs	34 - 44kg
Golden Retriever	65 - 75lbs	29 - 35kg	55 - 65lbs	24 - 30kg
Great Dane	130 - 180lbs	29 - 82kg	100 - 150lbs	45 - 69kg
Labrador Retriever	65 - 80lbs	29 - 37kg	55 - 70lbs	24 - 32kg
Poodle	45 - 65lbs	20 - 30kg	45 - 65lbs	20 - 30kg
Pug	14 - 18lbs	6 - 9kg	48 - 18lbs	6 - 9kg
Rottweiler	85 - 135lbs	38 - 62kg	80 - 100lbs	36 - 46kg
Yorkshire Terrier	5 - 7lbs	2 - 4kg	5 - 7lbs	2 - 4kg

Source: <http://modernpuppies.com/breedweightchart.aspx>



Recommended Weighing Scales

Marsden B-100



Ideal for: Pet food weighing
Capacity: 3kg to 30kg
Accuracy: 0.2g to 5g

Marsden V-23



Ideal for: smaller pets
Capacity: 25kg
Accuracy: 10g

Marsden V-100



Ideal for: medium sized pets
Capacity: 100kg
Accuracy: 50g

Marsden V-150



Ideal for: larger pets
Capacity: 150kg or 300kg
Accuracy: 50g or 100g





Accuracy Assured


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