

OBESITY

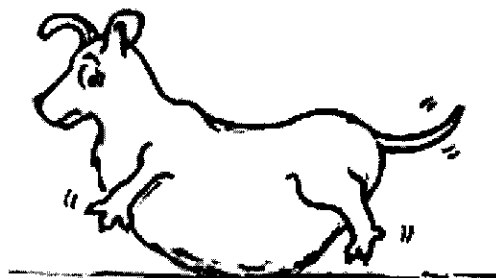
I have been told that my dog is obese and must be put on a diet. Is this true?

Nearly one-third (33%) of all adults in the United States are obese. Unfortunately, this same number now applies to our pets. Obesity leads to several diseases both in pets and people. Type II diabetes, heart disease and arthritis are the most common weight-related disorders.

Diet and weight reduction are the key to ensuring that your pet lives as long and healthy a life as possible.

What is obesity?

Obesity is defined as weighing 30% more than the ideal weight. With humans, this is fairly straightforward and can be determined by consulting weight and height charts. Dogs and cats are often diagnosed as obese by a combination of weight charts and body scoring.



A simplified form of body scoring follows:

VERY THIN

RIBS - Easily felt with no fat covering

TAIL BASE - Bones protrude with no tissue between the skin and bone

SIDE VIEW - Severe abdominal tuck or "drawn" appearance

OVERHEAD VIEW - Exaggerated hourglass shape

UNDERWEIGHT

RIBS - Easily felt with no fat covering

TAIL BASE - Bones are raised with little tissue between the skin and bone

SIDE VIEW - Abdominal tuck

OVERHEAD VIEW - Significant hourglass shape

IDEAL

RIBS - Easily felt with slight (1/2") fat cover

TAIL BASE - Smooth but bones can be felt under a thin layer of fat

SIDE VIEW - Abdominal tuck

OVERHEAD VIEW - Well-proportioned waist is present

OVERWEIGHT

RIBS - Difficult to feel with moderate (>1/2") fat cover

TAIL BASE - Some thickening or widening but bones can be felt under a moderate layer of fat

SIDE VIEW - No abdominal tuck or waist

OVERHEAD VIEW - Back is slightly broadened

OBESE