



Pet Obesity: An emerging health threat

Why is Fido fat? This is a common question with a fairly complicated answer. Approximately 40% of our pets are overweight or obese, defined as 20% over their ideal weight. This closely mirrors the situation for our human population. There are many causes of obesity including consuming too many calories, too little exercise, hormonal influences, genetics and behavioral components. A closer look at these factors may reveal where you can get “back on track” to an ideal weight for your pet. Studies consistently show that lean pets live longer than overweight pets.

1. Too Many Calories!

The main reason pets are overweight is because we feed them too much. Dry food is the most common diet fed and is very calorie dense. In addition, we give a lot of treats, mainly because we like to do this and our pets seem to enjoy it as well. We often don't fully appreciate how many calories part of a hotdog or a piece of toast is and slip them to our pets when no one is looking. Free-choice feeding allows pets to consume more food than they need and is not recommended.

2. Spaying/Neutering

One of the biggest risk factors for obesity is spaying and neutering. The health benefits of these procedures are well known and it is still highly recommended to neuter and spay all dogs and cats not being used for breeding.

However, neutering males or spaying females will induce metabolic changes within the body and affect fat metabolism. It is now recommended that the caloric intake be reduced by at least 20% immediately after a pet is neutered.

3. Lack of exercise

Inadequate exercise is as much of a problem for our pets as it is for people. We lead busy yet sedentary lives. Finding time to walk, run and play with your pet will make a difference for everyone.

4. Fat Cell Metabolism

Fat cells in the body never go away. If they are stimulated to fill up with fat due to over consumption of calories, they divide and make new fat cells. You can only “shrink” the fat cells, you cannot



make them go away. Fat will deposit under the skin and in the abdomen. Abdominal fat cells are hormonally active and produce

many substances that can profoundly affect the body and they contribute to the development of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

So what can we do to slim down our pets? First, a medical exam should be performed to look for underlying problems that will affect our diet plan. If there is a thyroid condition, orthopedic problems or other disease problems present, they should be addressed. We can help you figure out the correct calorie intake, an appropriate diet and a weight loss plan that works for your situation. It is essential to do follow-up monthly reweighing to assess the success of the plan.

For more information on pet obesity, visit Pfizer's website at www.stopcanineobesity.com.

HEALING THE HURT

Controlling Arthritis Pain

Chronic pain due to osteoarthritis is a very common problem in many of our older pets. Back pain, hip dysplasia, cruciate ligament ruptures and patella luxations are common genetic and traumatic disorders that lead to joint instability. Over time, cartilage is degraded and pain and inflammation will occur.

Signs of arthritis include: slowing down, difficulty with stairs, pain upon rising, stiffness after resting, and resistance to being touched in certain areas. Osteoarthritis is a progressive condition and often will wax and wane, with flare-ups becoming more common with time. Here are some of the most important steps in controlling chronic pain in your pet:

1. Keep them lean!!! Obesity stresses joints and prevents adequate exercise.

2. Modify the home environment.

Using ramps, providing good footing with rugs and rough textured surfaces, offering comfortable orthopedic bedding and elevating food and water bowls are all common sense adaptations that will help.

3. Consider dietary changes. J/d, a joint health diet has very high levels of



Omega-3 fatty acids as well as glucosamine to help prevent cartilage degradation. J/d is also limited in calories to help in weight control. Cosequin, a nutraceutical consisting of glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, has been shown to help repair cartilage and improve mobility in many patients.

4. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. NSAIDs like Rimadyl and Metacam are powerful pain relievers and also stop inflammation.

5. Use of additional pain control drugs. Tramadol, Amantadine and Gabapentin are newer drugs used to manage the more serious pain seen with advanced arthritis.

6. Adjunctive Treatment. Physical therapy, acupuncture, and underwater treadmill work-outs are useful in many patients when standard treatments are not effective.

SLENTROL: A New Hope for a Big Problem

One new option that may help some obese dogs (sorry, not for use in cats) is a new weight loss drug called Slentrol. This drug helps decrease appetite and slow fat absorption. Slentrol is available as a liquid medication given once daily. This promising drug is just one tool to help us control weight in our dogs and is not meant as a stand-alone solution.

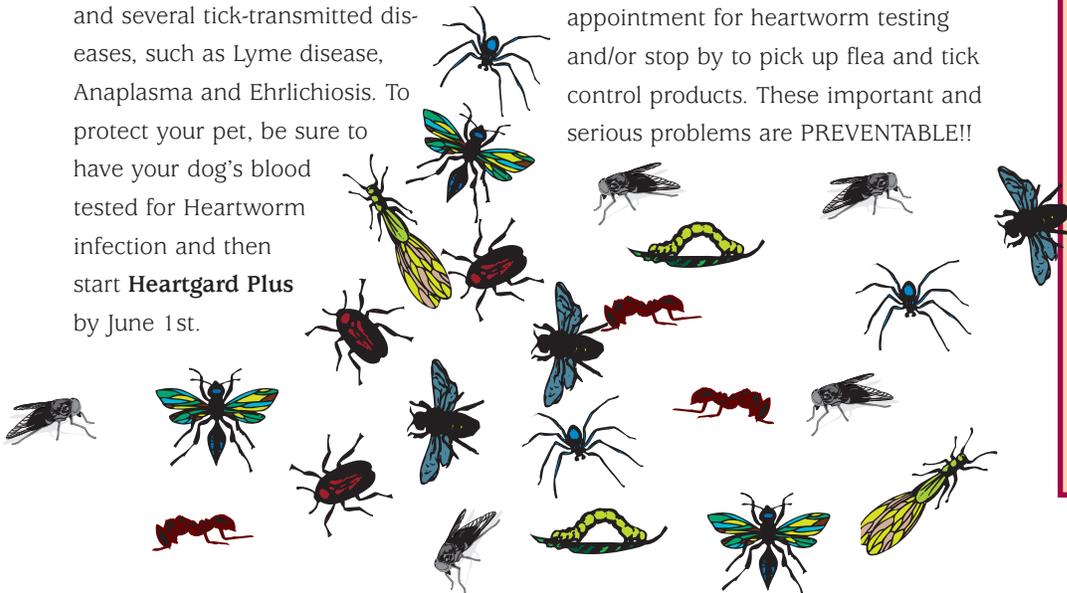
In a 4-month weight loss study, 97.8% of dogs that completed the study lost weight with an average of 11.8% of body weight. This drug has been shown to be very safe and no serious reactions were reported. The most common side effects were vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and anorexia.

If you think your dog would benefit from Slentrol, please schedule an exam so we can develop a weight loss plan tailored to your pet's needs.

Spring Parasite Alert

It's flea, tick and mosquito season again. With the arrival of these pesky bugs, comes the threat of heartworm disease and several tick-transmitted diseases, such as Lyme disease, Anaplasma and Ehrlichiosis. To protect your pet, be sure to have your dog's blood tested for Heartworm infection and then start **Heartgard Plus** by June 1st.

For flea and tick protection, we recommend **Frontline Plus** for dogs and **Revolution** for cats. Call to schedule an appointment for heartworm testing and/or stop by to pick up flea and tick control products. These important and serious problems are PREVENTABLE!!



Feline Hypertension

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is a very common and serious problem in our older cat population. Untreated, it can lead to retinal detachment and blindness, worsening kidney failure and blood clot formation. It is usually a secondary problem caused by many disorders, including kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, diabetes and other hormonal problems. In addition, it is now thought that a primary form of hypertension is being recognized more frequently. This form is not associated with the above disorders.

High blood pressure does not cause obvious symptoms in the early stages. In people it is considered a silent killer, because without screening for it, we do not know we have it. Most people have their blood pressure checked every time they visit the doctor. It is now recommended that cats over 10 years of age

have a screening blood pressure done at their annual visit.

Several readings are taken, and occasionally, if the pet is very stressed, repeat measurements may need to be taken at a different time to verify the actual blood pressure. Normal blood pressure in cats should be less than 160 mm hg.

Those cats that are found to have high blood pressure (greater than 180 mm hg) should be screened for the typical diseases associated with hypertension. A complete blood count, chemistry

profile, urinalysis and thyroid level should be done. Treatment of any underlying disorder is essential in helping to control the hypertension. In addition, specific treatment to lower the blood pressure usually needs to be done. A human medication, Norvasc, also known as amlodipine, is usually given once daily. Blood pressure monitoring will be done periodically to assure good control.



Tuna has her blood pressure checked while owner Sara Pihoda-Sether helps calm her.

Young Troopers



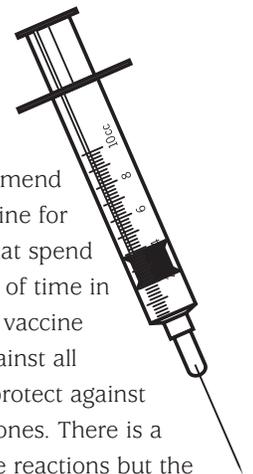
Edinburgh Pet Health Center hosted a Girl Scout troop for a tour and some hands-on participation. This is always a popular event for many young people. Looking through microscopes, watching a physical exam, viewing x-rays and donning surgical attire are some of the activities they experienced.

Leptospirosis-To vaccinate or not to vaccinate

Leptospirosis (Lepto) is a bacterial infection that affects all mammals, including people. Small numbers of bacteria can cause disease. There are many “serovars” or types of this bacteria and protection against one does not give protection against another. It can lead to severe cases of kidney and liver disease. It is excreted in the urine and exposure to this urine spreads the disease. There have been sporadic reports of this disease in city and suburban dogs in the Twin Cities and throughout the United States. The majority of dogs that become infected are those with exposure to rural and wet environments with a high

wildlife population, i.e. hunting dogs.

We currently recommend the “four-way” vaccine for Lepto for all dogs that spend significant amounts of time in high-risk areas. The vaccine does not protect against all serovars, but does protect against the most common ones. There is a slight risk of vaccine reactions but the majority of patients will not experience any problems due to vaccination. Please discuss with your veterinarian whether this vaccine is right for your dog.





Hospital News

The Minnesota Association of Veterinary Technicians (MAVT) is one of the largest veterinary technician groups in the nation. At the beginning of each year they offer a two-day educational convention that highlights not only local experts but also specialists from around the country. Three of our Certified

Veterinary Technicians, **Diane Paulus, Carol Olson, and Corrie Barrows** attended the MAVT convention this past February. They attended lectures on topics such as Parasitology, Advanced Periodontal Therapies, Pet Insurance, Family Centered Euthanasia, Small Animal Rehabilitation, and even learned techniques for improving memory.

Dr. Jennifer Hale has attended numerous local continuing education seminars on respiratory distress, pain control with continuous rate infusions, cat dermatitis, diabetes and Cushing's disease. She also conducts in-house training for our staff to share the new information she learns. In June, she will

be attending the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) convention in Seattle, Washington.

In February, **Dr. Lisa Carpenter** attended the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association's annual convention and in March she attended the American Animal Hospital Association's annual convention in Denver, Colorado. She attended many valuable lectures on pain management, anesthesia updates, skin disease, behavior problems, and a variety of other topics. We will be upgrading our protocols for pain control for both acute and chronic pain to better help our patients and stay current with the latest recommendations.

Agility Action



Dr. Lisa's Phalene **Abby** debuted in her first agility trial at the Papillon Club of America's National Specialty in San Antonio, Texas, qualifying in her first ever Novice Jumpers with Weaves class. She took second place by being 15 seconds under course time.

New Arrival!



Rhonda Noetzelman welcomed a new furry family member, **Halo**, a 9 week old kitten, into her home. Congratulations on the new arrival!



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