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1 AN OVERWEIGHT PET IS NO JOKE

Is it difficult to feel their ribs or spine? Is it difficult to see your pet's waist? Is her abdomen sagging? If you think your pet may be overweight, let us check him out! We are here to help!

2 DIABETES IN CATS

Diabetes mellitus is one of the most common endocrine diseases in cats. Find out more about the causes and signs of diabetes mellitus, the value of regular veterinary checks and the importance of weight management.

3 HEALTH RISKS IN OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE DOGS

As in people, dogs carrying extra weight place extra demands on virtually all the organs of their bodies. The health risks to overweight dogs are serious and every dog owner should be aware of them.

4 DOG TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR TIPS

Punishing a scared dog is not helping the dog cope or overcome his/her fears. Forcing a dog to face such fears often results in a worsening of the fear and risks fear-aggressive behaviour.

Weight Management for Pets: An overweight pet is no joke

Some people seem to think that fat pets are funny, and they put photos and videos of fat pets on-line. But whether you see an overweight dog or cat in your neighbourhood or on YouTube, it's no laughing matter.

Dependent on the size of the pet, just 2 to 4 kilos above the ideal body weight can put a dog or cat at risk for developing serious medical conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, osteoarthritis (arthritis), increased frequency of joint injuries, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

If your pet is overweight, we urge you to find out why. It's the first step in helping your pet live longer.

- It may not be just a matter of eating too much. Weight gain in pets can be caused by an underlying medical condition such as hypothyroidism and Cushing's disease. If that's the case, the sooner your veterinarian can treat the underlying cause, the better.
- In addition, your veterinarian can use a dog or cat weight chart to determine your pet's ideal weight and the number of calories to achieve it safely.
- Once your veterinarian recommends new daily calories to achieve this weight, make sure you only feed that amount of calories in several meals per day. Ideally you'll use a prescription diet pet food and minimize or eliminate treats.
- Switching foods? Allow a week for the transition so you can minimize digestive upsets. Mix

- the old food with the new food in gradually decreasing proportions.
- Start by mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ ' of the new diet with $\frac{3}{4}$ ' of the old diet for 1-2 days.
- Then increase to half-and-half for another 2 days.
- Then give $\frac{3}{4}$ ' of the volume as the new diet for a final 2-3 days before completely switching to the new diet.



Finally – be sure to give your pet plenty of exercise each day. With a healthier plan, your pet can return to an ideal, possibly life-extending weight.

Source:

<http://pricelesspetclinic.com/news/an-overweight-pet-is-no-joke>

Diabetes in Cats

By: Dr Seven Devery

What is it?

Diabetes mellitus is a common disease in dogs, cats and humans alike. It is a condition that affects the metabolism of carbohydrate, protein and fat due to inadequate insulin secretion. This results in high blood glucose and glucose in the urine. There are two types of diabetes, type I and type II. People and dogs tend to suffer from Type I diabetes which is characterised by low insulin levels in the blood. Type



It is more common in cats and is characterised by a combination of inadequate insulin secretion and impaired insulin action. Cats can be insulin resistant

Predisposing Factors:

- Age – most cats are approximately 8-13 years of age with the range extending from 1-19 years of age.
- Breed – there are no breed predilections
- Sex – male, although females are also susceptible

Factors that contribute to insulin resistance:

- Genetic predisposition
- Obesity
- Inflammation of the pancreas
- Pancreatic cancer
- Physical inactivity
- Concurrent diseases
- Drugs (eg corticosteroids)
- Diet
- Length of time patient has high blood glucose

Clinical Signs - Early clinical signs include an increase in water consumption and urination and an increased appetite with associated weight loss. A common presentation is an obese cat with recent weight loss. As the condition progresses other signs such as lethargy, an oily coat with dandruff and muscle wastage may develop. In some cases, the patients become weak in the hind and appear to have 'dropped hock' stance. If left untreated, the animals become anorexic, lethargic and start to vomit. This can progress to a complicated condition called ketoacidosis.

Diagnosis:

A complete physical examination followed by a blood profile (including glucose levels) and urinalysis are required to diagnose diabetes. Often the urine is cultured to assess if there is a concurrent urinary tract infection. The blood profile will also assess for other underlying problems or disease. In some cases other procedures such as radiography or ultrasonography may be recommended.

Treatment - The ultimate aim of therapy is to obtain diabetic remission. This can only be achieved if elevation in blood glucose has not been present for long and there has not been destruction of pancreatic cells. In most cases, insulin therapy needs to be instigated in association with dietary changes.

Insulin Therapy - Insulin is given by injection twice a day at 12 hours intervals (ie 7am and 7pm). It is important that your pet is fed in association with the injections. Your veterinarian and nurses will be happy to show you how to give injections, to ensure both you and your pet will have stress free therapy.

In some cases where the insulin injections have not adequately controlled the glucose levels a medication called glargine can be used. If required, your veterinarian will discuss this in further detail.

In the case of insulin overdose or failure to eat, your pet's blood glucose level may drop to a dangerous level. The signs to watch out for include weakness, staggering, trembling, collapse

and/or seizures. If this happens, apply honey directly to the gums or administer a sugar liquid orally.

Diet - Instituting a routine is critical in ensuing good stabilisation of your pet. This involves feeding the same amount and type of food at the same time each day. It is recommended to feed half the total daily amount of food at the time of insulin injection. If your cat is a "grazer" (ie eats a small amount throughout the day and night) then leave the food out for he/she to consume throughout the day.

To ensure your cat gets the correct dietary requirements and caloric intake for a diabetic patient we recommend Hills m/d, w/d or r/d. Our veterinarian will recommend the food type best for your cat. Other prescription diets include Royal Canin Diabetic. If your pet is reluctant to eat the prescription diet, please contact the clinic. It is important that he/she continues to eat regularly.

Obesity is a common problem in diabetic cats. This can cause reversible insulin resistance which in some situations may resolve once obesity is corrected. During this phase it is really important to watch out for signs of hypoglycaemia or low blood glucose (eg weakness, staggering, collapse).

Home Monitoring - We recommend that you keep a diary purely for monitoring your cat's diabetes. Daily comments about their general demeanour, appetite and amount of water consumed over a 24 hour period ideally are recorded. Weekly accounts of their ability to jump (ie onto your lap or furniture) and their body weight is also recommended. This can provide essential information that may facilitate early recognition of changes or problems that require veterinary attention.

Prognosis - The prognosis depends on many factors. These include owner commitment, ease of glucose regulation, avoidance of chronic high glucose state and the presence of other diseases. Therefore it is essential to treat any concurrent problems (eg obesity, chronic pancreatitis, hyperthyroid, dental infections). Sterilisation is also vital to ensure good stabilisation. The average survival time is 3 years from diagnosis, however with good maintenance of the condition and regular evaluations by your veterinarian, good quality of life for 5 years or more is possible

If you have any questions about your pet's therapy, please don't hesitate to call on (08) 9524-6644.



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Health risks in overweight or obese dogs

As in people, dogs carrying extra pounds of weight place extra demands on virtually all the organs of their bodies. When we overload these organs, disease and sometimes death are the consequences. The health risks to overweight dogs are serious and every dog owner should be aware of them.

The more common consequences of obesity in dogs are discussed below.

Diabetes mellitus (sugar diabetes) One of the most common complications of obesity in dogs is the development of diabetes mellitus (sugar diabetes). Obesity causes an increase in the secretion of insulin in response to the increased blood glucose level in the overweight dog. Insulin is also more in demand simply because there is a greater amount of tissue in an overweight dog. When requirements for insulin exceed the ability of the body to produce insulin, diabetes mellitus develops. If the need for insulin increases over a long period of time, the cells in the pancreas which produce insulin can actually 'burn out,' again resulting in diabetes.



Damage to joints, bones, and ligaments

Approximately 25% of overweight dogs develop serious joint complications. The bones, joints, muscles, and associated tendons and ligaments all work together to give the dog smooth and efficient movement. If they are required to carry excess weight, they can start to become damaged. Arthritis can develop and the pain and joint changes associated with hip dysplasia can become markedly more severe. Extra tension on joints caused by an increased weight load can also lead to damage of certain ligaments. Ligaments are tough, fibrous strands of tissue that hold one bone in proximity to another bone in joints. One of the ligaments in the knee, the anterior cruciate ligament, is very prone to strains or tears. If this ligament is torn, the knee becomes very unstable and the dog is reluctant to use it. Surgery must be done to repair this torn ligament. Certain breeds of dogs, such as Dachshunds are prone to develop intervertebral disc disease ('slipped disc'). Carrying extra weight increases the probability that they will develop this painful and sometimes debilitating condition.

Heart disease and increased blood pressure

As in people, overweight dogs tend to have increased blood pressure (hypertension). The heart has an increased work load

since it must pump additional blood to excess tissues. This can lead to congestive heart failure.

Difficulty breathing

In overweight animals, the lungs cannot function properly. The additional fat in the chest restricts the expansion of the lungs. The extra fat in the abdomen pushes against the diaphragm, which separates the abdominal cavity from the chest. This also results in less space in the chest for the lungs to expand on inspiration. To make matters worse, the increased quantity of tissue puts an increased demand on the lungs to supply oxygen. These changes are especially serious in dogs who may already have a respiratory disease.

Decreased stamina

Dogs who are overweight have less endurance and stamina. Carrying all that extra weight around takes a lot more work. The heart, muscles, and respiratory system are all asked to do more than they were designed for.

Heat intolerance

Fat is an excellent insulator, which is fine if you are a polar bear. But if you are an overweight dog in the heat of summer, the excess fat can make you miserable, and much less capable of regulating your body temperature.

Decreased liver function

The liver stores fat so when a dog is overweight, an increased amount of fat builds up in the liver. This is called hepatic lipidosis. This condition can result in decreased liver function.

Increased surgical and anesthetic risk

The effects of obesity on the heart and lungs have serious ramifications during anesthesia. Cardiac arrest (heart stops) and poor circulation of oxygenated blood to the tissues can occur. Many of the anesthetics are taken up by fat, so an overweight animal will take longer to come out of anesthesia because the anesthetic must be removed from the fat by the body. In addition, many anesthetics are broken down by the liver. A fatty liver may not be as efficient at breaking down anesthetics and other drugs, so again, recovery may be delayed. The increased fat in the tissues makes surgery more difficult. Basically it is harder to find or get at what you are looking for. The fat obscures the surgical area. For example, in abdominal surgery in an obese dog, there may be literally inches of fat between where the skin incision is made and the organ you need to work on, such as the urinary bladder. This makes the surgery technically more difficult and the procedure will also take longer, which again increases the anesthetic risk.

Reproductive problems

Overweight dogs tend to have more problems giving birth than dogs at their optimum weight. This difficult birthing is called dystocia. Dogs experiencing dystocia often need veterinary assistance to deliver their pups, and may require a cesarean section (C-section).

Digestive disorders

An overweight dog has an increased risk of developing constipation and may also have more problems with intestinal gas and flatulence, which is not pleasant for the dog or the owner.



Decreased immune function

Obesity in the dog is associated with decreased resistance to viral and bacterial infections. Canine distemper and Salmonella infections, especially, seem to be more severe in dogs who are overweight. The exact cause(s) of this lowered resistance to disease in obese dogs is unknown.

Skin and hair coat problems

The risk of skin and hair coat diseases are increased in dogs who are overweight. The skin forms more and different types of oils, the skin may fold in on itself creating pockets, which are ideal for the accumulation of oils and the development of infections.

Increased risk of cancer

The exact link between obesity and developing certain cancers is unknown. However, there have been studies which suggest that obese dogs tend to have an increased risk of developing certain types of cancers, including a particular type of cancer of the urinary bladder. A recent study also found that dogs who were obese at one year of age were at greater risk of developing mammary tumors.

Decreased quality and length of life

It is evident from the above discussion that the health, ability to play, even to breathe, are diminished in overweight dogs. Overweight dogs may become more irritable due to being hot, in pain, or simply uncomfortable. Overweight dogs die at a younger age than those maintained at an optimum weight.

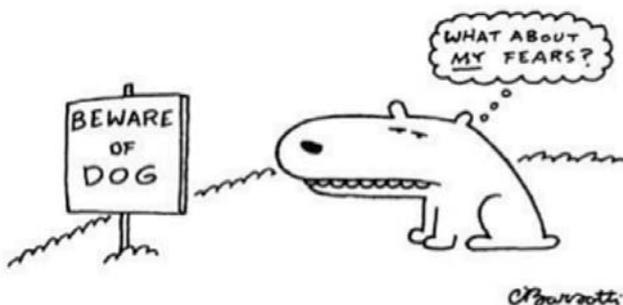
It is clear that we are not contributing positively to our dog's health when we allow them to become overweight. The next time those big brown eyes say, 'Can I please have a treat,' think very carefully first. In most cases, your answer should be 'No, and I'm doing this for your own good,' and it will be absolutely true.

Source: <http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+1659&aid=694>

Dog Training Tips

by Sonya Bevan "Dog Charming"

Punishing a scared dog is not helping the dog cope or overcome his/her fears. Forcing a dog to face such fears often results in a worsening of the fear and risks fear-aggressive behaviour. It is also not improving the connection you have with your pet.



Comforting/supporting your dog to cope will not reinforce the fear and make it worse unless you are conveying your stress and concern by your body language, touch and verbal input. Remember, the level of fear will dictate whether you are able

to comfort/distract your dog or whether it is best to remove your dog. Under extreme stress, any of the 4 F's kick in (fight, flight, freeze, or fiddle) and your dog will be oblivious to any attempts to console him. Ultimately, recognize what it is your dog fears and do your best to avoid these situations until you have taken steps to help your dog cope with these fears.

Here's a quote from a video and one trainer's perspective about fear in dogs;

"When an animal says 'I'm afraid', either get him out of the situation or comfort him. Anything else is inhumane...then ultimately deal with changing the fear. We need to learn to listen to them when they say they are afraid, we have to find ways to offer them comfort and then ultimately deal with it (the fear)... Don't put him in that situation or build his skills (so he is no longer afraid)." - Suzanne Clothier -

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FREE Weight Loss Clinic

To assist you in dieting your pet to his/her correct weight, and then keeping them there, Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital is running **FREE Weight Loss Clinics for Pets** throughout May.

These clinics are run by our qualified Veterinary Nurses and are **free of charge**.

The objectives of the clinics are to:

- Help clients with overweight pets to set realistic weight loss targets;
- Provide professional advice on how this can be achieved; and
- Provide advice on slightly overweight pets before this situation worsens.

Simply call us on 9524 6644 to book your FREE Weight Clinic Appointment today.