



Auckland Veterinary Services Limited

Client Fact Sheet #12

Weight Management Clinic

Welcome to Auckland Veterinary Services Ltd's weight management clinic.

When starting the weight management clinic there is an initial complementary consultation with the weight management technician. Allow approximately half an hour for this. During this consultation we will go through your pets personalised weight management program such as feeding requirements and an exercise program.

Below are some tips and ideas to help you and your family who are responsible for looking after your pet.

We understand that losing weight is not an easy thing to do. Just remember when your cat or dog refuses to eat their meal or they look up at you with their 'hungry eyes' you are doing them a favour by not providing any other types food or treats. Weight reduction is often only a temporary exercise and once the ideal weight is reached, a sensible diet with treats and other foods can be re-introduced at appropriate levels. So it is not forever! Be strong!

Very Important. If you put down your pets food and they do not eat it, within 5 minutes, pick it up. Only put it back down again if your pet is disturbing you for food (acting hungry). Pets, especially dogs, will eat if they are hungry. When they do not eat the prescribed diet it means that they are not hungry. Please persevere with this, as it is very important, because if you offer them alternative foods they will quickly learn that if they refuse to eat for long enough you will give in and give them something that tastes better. By being strong they will quickly learn that if they do not eat what they are given there will be nothing else (refer back to the last paragraph if you are feeling guilty!)

Liken it to teaching a 3 year old to eat their vegetables.

If you or your pet is not coping with cutting out treats all together, we have some low fat treats available for dogs (Super Coat Low Fat Treats come in two sizes). They can be given up to two of these treats a day without affecting their diet.

Make sure you are giving the prescribed amount of prescription food (this will be explained in your initial consultation) by using the measuring cup provided. If more than one person is feeding your pet, put the prescribed daily amount into a container and have them take any food they give the pet out of this container. Once the container is empty your pet receives no more food that day. This allows everyone to feed your pet but ensures that it is not overfed.

The more meals you give the better i.e. 2-3 times daily - but make sure you still only give the prescribed amount of food over the day.

You should bring your pet in every 2 weeks for a weight check. Please write down any questions you have so that we can make sure you have the correct information.

If you normally exercise your dog three times a week, for at least 20 minutes, keep up the good work and concentrate on the diet. If you do not normally exercise at all, start with very short walks and increase them by a few minutes each week. Do not start with a vigorous training regime if your pet is not used to it, as it may be detrimental to their health, because of the excess weight they are carrying. There are people available to walk your dog if you cannot. Please ask us for their contact numbers. We have some fact sheets that may help with ideas.

With cats, consider using either a catnip toy or a piece of newspaper with a string attached so that you can drag it around with the cat following or a scratching post to introduce a small amount of exercise, again we have some fact sheets that may help with ideas.

Excess weight can cause a large number of problems for pets including:

- Joint problems (the body is only designed to carry the ideal weight)
- Heart Disease
- Skin problems
- Inactivity
- Neurological disorders
- Diabetes
- Respiratory problems
- Susceptibility to infections
- Decreased quality of life

So you can see why we are so pleased that you have taken the first step in managing your pet's weight. We are passionate about weight reduction and want to help you and your pet succeed.

About 40% of dogs and about 33% of cats are overweight. An Obese pet is one that is more than 15% overweight.

Most pet owners report a happier, healthier and much younger acting pet after successful weight loss and often wish they had made the move to reduce their pets weight a long time ago.

If your cat or dog has been given a Body Condition Score of above 5 (see our staff for more information on the Body Condition Score System) your pet is obese. A weight reduction plan is needed for the optimal health and well being of your pet.

We will endeavour to keep in touch with you but if you have any questions or concerns please contact our technician Andrea Martin on **818 5697**.