

A. Y. Kernaleguen, B.Sc., D.V.M.
M. L. Anderson, B.Sc., D.V.M.
L. R. Pobler, B.Sc., D.V.M.

Box 268
Stoughton, SK
S0G 4T0

Helpful Suggestions to help your Dog Lose Weight

Being over weight puts dogs at risk for a number of health concerns, which can drastically shorten their lives and can be expensive and owner intensive to treat. Diabetes, heart failure, arthritis and urinary stones are all possible complications of being overweight. Being overweight put their body into a constant state of inflammation, which releases free radicals that cause a lot of damage to tissues. Obese dogs are prone to poor skin coats because their body isn't properly digesting the proteins needed to rejuvenate a healthy coat and it is busy fixing the damage caused by free radicals. Remember to go slow and be patient, aim for 1% of weight loss per week. It can take upwards of 3 to 6 months to reach a healthier weight. On a medium sized dog 7 extra pounds is equivalent to 42 pounds on a person!

Here are some helpful hints to encourage weight loss:

Control Access to Food and Amounts.

Everyone in the household **MUST** be on the same page. In busy households with lots of people may be beneficial to make a feeding chart with **time, amount to feed** and **that "Poochie" was fed.**

- **Measure** out entire food allowance for one day. Do **not** feed free choice.
- Meal feed at least twice a day.

Meal Feeding: Based on dogs weight or recommended feeding amount split daily allowance up into meals. Pick at least two times daily that someone is around to feed the dog. Feed dog one portion of daily allowance at breakfast time. If they do not eat it all within 10 minutes take it away. At suppertime give them their other portion again for 10 minutes. If they wont eat at all do not coax them to eat with treats or anything yummy on the food they **WILL** eat when they get hungry enough. Do not add their supper portion to their breakfast portion if they do not eat any breakfast. If they eat half their breakfast only add half their supper portion etc. Meal feeding allows you to control what each pet is eating in order to help them lose weight and it gives you a good idea of how they are feeling as to how willing to eat they are daily. It is especially important when feeding multiple animals at once.

Feed a high quality food specifically designed for *weight loss*.

Recommended Diet Foods:

Switching to a veterinary diet specifically targeted for weight loss is highly recommended. They are designed to provide appropriate protein levels during weight loss which helps to preserve lean body mass. Appropriate mixes of soluble and insoluble fiber to help them feel full longer and decrease hunger and stop them from begging for food. Feed dog based on what their ideal weight would be not what they currently are.

MCRC Satiety, MCRC Calorie Control, Hills Metabolic, WD or RD

- If you like to feed treats here are a few low calorie suggestions
 - Dental dog food
 - Royal Canin Dental or Small Dog Dental
 - Hills t/d Canine or t/d Canine Small Bites
 - Enzadent chews
 - Medi-chews
 - Medi-treats

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- Vegetables: carrots, celery, cucumbers, peas (**NOT** onions, garlic, grapes or raisins)
 - Treats should not exceed 10% of daily caloric intake. (for a small dog this is 1-2 treats per day)
 - **NO OTHER TREATS OR TABLE FOOD**
- 2) Increase exercise: Walks, Ball, Swimming, Frisbee. Exercising during weight loss helps promote lean muscle mass. Be careful not to over do it at first. Slowly re-introduce exercise and gradually increase intensity.
 - 3) More play/games: Make your dog work for their treats. Ex: sit to down 10 times equals 1 treat.

Reweigh Monthly and Track Progress

It can be difficult to visualize weight loss in small amounts when first starting the journey. Keep a chart and pictures of starting weight, and reweigh monthly to keep on track. As they lose the weight you will have to recalculate feeding amounts.

**The best treat you can give your dog is spending time with them;
Take them for a walk or go play ball.**