

PET OBESITY: MORE THAN “A FEW EXTRA POUNDS”

CAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION • PET PARENT SERIES

Healthy weight is about more than appearance: it supports your pet's comfort, mobility, health, and quality of life.

KNOW YOUR PET'S BODY CONDITION

Weight alone doesn't tell the whole story. Body Condition Score (BCS) evaluates body fat, while Muscle Condition Score (MCS) evaluates muscle.

At an ideal body condition:

- Ribs are easily felt without a thick fat covering
- A waist is visible from above
- The abdomen tucks upward from the side

Ideal BCS: is typically 4–5 out of 9

WHY EXTRA WEIGHT MATTERS

Excess weight can:

- Increase joint stress and mobility problems
- Increase or complicate certain health risks
- Make walking, jumping, grooming, playing, and other normal activities harder

MEASURE FOOD: DON'T EYEBALL IT

Feeding guides are starting points, not prescriptions. Calorie needs vary by pet.

- Measure meals consistently; weighing food in grams is most precise.
- Count all calories: treats, chews, table food, toppers, pill pockets, and extras.
- Recheck weight and BCS regularly.

REMEMBER THE 90/10 RULE

Aim for about 90% or more of daily calories from a complete and balanced diet and no more than 10% from treats and extras.

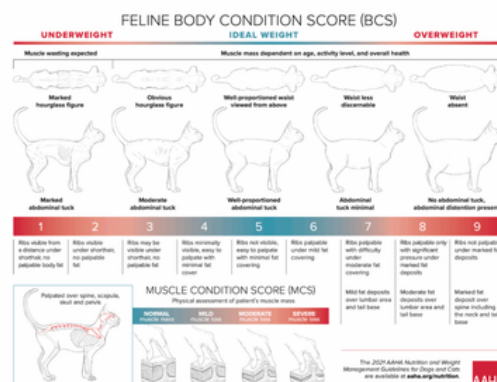
Tip: Use part of your pet's measured daily food as treats.

IF YOUR PET NEEDS TO LOSE WEIGHT

Ask your veterinarian for your pet's Body Condition Score, a target weight, recommended daily calories, including treats, and a recheck plan.

Weight loss should be gradual and nutritionally complete.

Never crash diet a pet, especially a cat, or dramatically restrict food without veterinary guidance.



References: AAHA Nutrition & Weight Management Guidelines; WSAVA Global Nutrition Guidelines and BCS resources.

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