

PURINA® PROPLAN® VETERINARY DIETS

Revisiting the Weight Conversation

Helping Clients and Patients
Live Their Best Lives

Pet Obesity: A Growing Problem

The topic of pet obesity in your practice is not new—and it's a conversation that can be as stubborn as the pounds themselves. An estimated 55.8% of dogs and 59.5% of cats in the USA are overweight or obese.¹ The most common contributing factors for obesity are either pet related (age, neutering, gender), owner-related (overfeeding, excessive treats), or a combination of both.

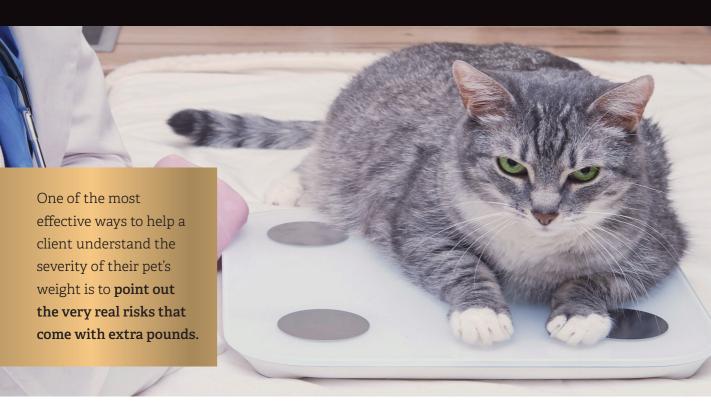
Clients may hesitate to discuss weight because they don't see a problem, or because they worry about being judged. Veterinarians can also be reluctant to discuss excess weight with pet owners. They may find it to be a difficult subject, or worry about offending the owner.^{2,3} However, initiating the conversation is the first step in helping the pet.



Weighty Consequences

Discussing extra pounds may be stressful to clients, but their pets' weight is adding extra stress to bones and organs, which may lead to additional health conditions. This condition is linked with many diseases, including

osteoarthritis and feline diabetes.^{4,5} In fact, insurance claims for treatment of pets with conditions and diseases associated with obesity totaled in excess of \$90 million in a single year.⁶



Overweight or obese cats are^{4,5}:

- nearly four times more likely to develop diabetes
- nearly 5 times more likely to develop lameness requiring veterinary care
- more likely to have nonallergic skin problems
- · at risk for urinary tract diseases
- prone to liver disease and failure of the organ
- likely to experience osteoarthritis and ligament damage

Overweight or obese dogs are at risk of developing⁵:

- tracheal collapse
- diabetes
- cruciate ligament disease
- osteoarthritis
- urinary tract disease
- intervertebral disc disease
- pancreatitis

A landmark Purina® study showed restricted-fed dogs lived healthier lives?

EXTENDED HEALTHY YEARS

A groundbreaking 14-year study by Purina researchers showed that feeding dogs to an ideal body condition* throughout their lives can significantly extend a dog's healthy years—by a median of 1.8 years for dogs in the study.⁵ And although the restricted-fed dogs in the study generally developed the same chronic conditions as they aged, the need for treatment of those conditions was delayed by an average of approximately two years compared to control-fed dogs.



*Lean or ideal body condition refers to the evaluation of body physique in pets as an indicator of their overall health and well-being, generally falling into three categories: too heavy, ideal and too thin.

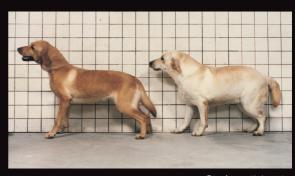


- First completed study of its kind to last the entire life span of dogs
- 14-year study conducted at the Purina PetCare Center in Missouri
- 48 Labrador Retrievers were paired by sex and litter, then randomly placed in two different groups
- All dogs received the same 100% nutritionally complete and balanced foods—only the amount differed
- First completed study to document that feeding to an ideal body condition extends healthy years in mammals larger than rodents

Study Findings

RESTRICTED-FED DOGS

- Extended healthy years by a median of 1.8 years
- Experienced a delayed need for long-term treatment of osteoarthritis, which was treated at an average of 3 years later
- Experienced a delayed need for treatment of chronic conditions, which required treatment at an average of 2.1 years later



Study participants.

How We Conducted The Purina Life Span Study¹⁰

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Forty-eight, 8-week-old Labrador Retriever dogs from seven litters took part in the study. The dogs were paired within their litters according to gender and body weight and randomly assigned to either a control or restricted-fed group.

FEEDING SCHEDULE

Dogs in the control group were allowed to eat an unlimited amount of food as puppies and a consistent amount of food beginning at age 3.25 years. Dogs in the restricted-fed group received 25% less than the amount eaten by their paired littermates.

All dogs ate the same 100% nutritionally complete and balanced diets (first puppy diets, then adult formulations) throughout the study. Only the amount provided was different.

HOW DOGS WERE ASSESSED

Dogs were weighed periodically throughout their lives. Beginning at 6 years of age, they were evaluated annually for body condition using the Purina Body Condition System, a scientifically validated standard used by veterinarians to evaluate body physique in pets to assess weight and health.

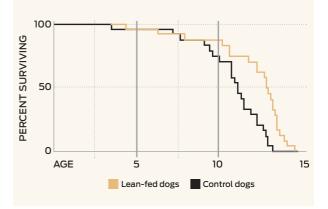


Other health indicators were also measured annually to assess condition and health. Some of these indicators included: glucose, cholesterol and triglyceride levels beginning at age 2; body fat mass, lean body mass and bone mass beginning at age 6; and insulin beginning at age 9.

Results

EXTENDED HEALTHY YEARS

Restricted-fed Labrador Retrievers who received 25% less food than their littermates in the control group experienced extended healthy years, by a median of 1.8 years.



HEALTHIER

Restricted-fed dogs had healthier blood glucose levels, blood pressures, and heart rates than control dogs.



Body Condition System

- Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominence. Minimal loss of muscle mass
- Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent.

 Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.



- Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- Ribs palpable, without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.



- Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
 - Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.



The BODY CONDITION SYSTEM was developed at the Nestlé Purina PetCare Center and has been validated as documented in the following publications: Mawby D, Bartges JW, Mayers T et. al. Comparison of body fat estimates by dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry and deuterium oxide dilusion in client owned dogs. Compendium 2001; 23 (9A): 70 Laflamme DP. Development and Validation of a Body Condition Score System of Dogs. Canine Practice July/August 1997; 22: 10–15 Kealy, et. al. Effects of Diet Restriction on Life Span and Age-Related Changes in Dogs. JAVMA 2002; 220: 1315–1320.

- Ribs visible on short-haired cats.

 No palpable fat. Severe abdominal tuck. Lumbar vertebrae and wings of ilia easily palpated.
- Ribs easily visible on short-haired cats. Lumbar vertebrae obvious with minimal muscle mass. Pronounced abdominal tuck. No palpable fat.
- Ribs easily palpable with minimal fat covering. Lumbar vertebrae obvious. Obvious waist behind ribs. Minimal abdominal fat.
- Ribs palpable with minimal fat covering. Noticeable waist behind ribs. Slight abdominal tuck.
 Abdominal fat pad absent.



Well-proportioned. Observe waist behind ribs. Ribs palpable with slight fat covering.
Abdominal fat pad minimal.



- Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist and abdominal fat pad distinguishable but not obvious. Abdominal tuck absent.
- Ribs not easily palpated with moderate fat covering. Waist poorly discernible. Obvious rounding of abdomen. Moderate abdominal fat pad.
- Ribs not palpable with excess fat covering. Waist absent. Obvious rounding of abdomen with prominent abdominal fat pad. Fat deposits present over lumbar area.
- Ribs not palpable under heavy fat cover. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, face and limbs. Distention of abdomen with no waist. Extensive abdominal fat deposits.



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6 Tips for a Meaningful and Positive Conversation

It can be difficult to start a discussion about weight and nutrition, especially if a client is visiting for a different issue. Here are some tips that can help lead to a more positive conversation:

- **1. SET AN AGENDA** by asking the client if you can talk about nutrition during their visit. This helps demonstrate respect to the client, sets expectations, and encourages focus.
- **2. PRACTICE EMPATHY** and create a judgement-free space when discussing their pet's current diet and exercise routine to help build a trusting relationship.
- **3. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS,** such as to describe the pet's daily activities and changes in mobility or "fitness," to help reveal concerns about the pet's weight.
- **4. ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS** like "when" or "why" can help you better understand your clients, why their pet's weight has changed, or even their resistance to change.

5. PRACTICE REFLECTIVE LISTENING

by summarizing the key points you've heard from your client to further build trust and make sure your client feels heard.

6. TAKE PURPOSEFUL PAUSES in between topics to ask clients if they have questions or if they understand the information you've shared.

6 Tips for Pet Owners with Overweight Pets

The Purina Life Span Study revealed the important role ideal body condition plays in a pet's health. Now it's up to your clients to introduce a healthier lifestyle. Offer a plan that promotes healthy body weight with these simple steps:

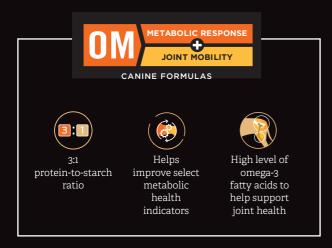
- 1. HELP CLIENTS ASSESS THEIR PET'S BODY CONDITION using the Purina Body Condition System. Ask your Purina Veterinary Consultant about our Healthy Hug brochure for clients.
- **2. CREATE A NUTRITION PLAN** that feeds each patient to their ideal body condition. Refer to feeding guidelines on packaging and adjust feeding amounts as necessary.
- **3. STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASURING SERVINGS** according to your feeding plan. Dividing the daily food allowance among multiple meals can help increase a pet's energy expenditure.
- **4. BUILD A TREAT ALLOWANCE,** up to 10% of daily calories, into a patient's nutrition plan. Encourage clients to limit treats, especially table scraps. Reminds clients that calories add up quickly.
- **5. DAILY EXERCISE** is one of the keys to a pet's health, such as walking or fetch with a dog, or mobile toys and food puzzles for cats. Work with clients to add an appropriate amount of activity to their pet's day.

6. DISCUSS PERSONALIZED

SOLUTIONS based on your conversation, like a puzzle feeder to slow down fast eaters, or separate feeding times and "smart bowls" for homes with multiple pets.

Helping Patients Return to Ideal Body Condition

Adding the right nutrition to a patient's feeding plan can make a world of difference. Purina® Pro Plan® Veterinary Diets offers a variety of formulas to help pets lose body fat while maintaining lean muscle mass.





Additional Resources for Clinics and Clients

For additional resources about weight management, encouraging client compliance and more, talk to your Purina Veterinary Consultant and visit:

PurinaProPlanVets.com/MetabolicResponse





Questions? Concerns? Contact our PURINA Veterinary Resource Center.

1-800-222-VETS (8387) 8am - 6:00pm CT Monday through Friday

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