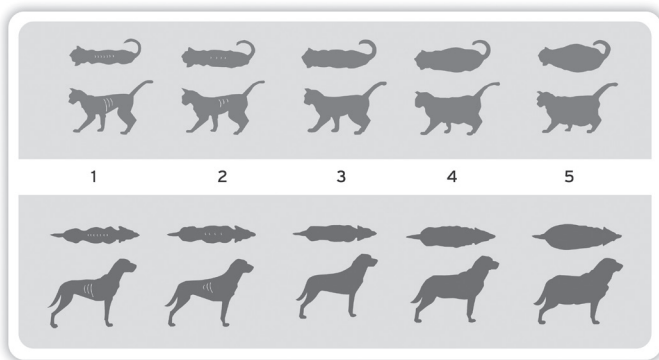


What Shape Is My Pet In?



25% of cats and dogs seen by a veterinarian are overweight. This statistic should prompt every pet owner to be vigilant and monitor their dog's or cat's weight. Any excess weight is harmful to the maintenance of a pet's optimum health and can make them prone to various diseases.



Your pet's weight corresponds to:

- Thin Lean Ideal Overweight Obese
-

Why is my pet no longer at an ideal weight?

Excess weight occurs gradually when the pet stores more energy than it expends. Any unused calories ingested are stored in the form of fat. This results in an accumulation of excess fat in the body. Some breeds (such as the Labrador) are known to be prone to weight gain. However, this is by no means a foregone conclusion, and a good healthy diet will enable them to maintain their ideal weight.

A neutered pet does not necessarily gain weight if its diet and daily feeding amount are adapted to its life style and it has a sufficient amount of exercise. To the right is a list of some of the causes of excess weight.

Excessive Calorie Intake

- Food high in fat
- Constant access to highly palatable foods
- Excess food consumption (snacks, left-overs)

Insufficient Calorie Expenditure

- Low metabolism (depending on breed, sex, age)
- Low level of physical activity
- Spaying or neutering

What are the effects of excess weight on my pet's health?

Dogs and cats who are overweight or obese are more vulnerable and more prone to develop certain diseases.

A shorter life expectancy – It has been proven that overweight dogs have shorter lives than those of a normal body weight.

Joint diseases (such as osteoarthritis) – An overweight puppy is more likely to be overweight as an adult. In large breeds, excess weight can lead to joint disorders that are often irreversible. A vicious circle develops in an overweight pet suffering from joint disease: the heavier it is, the less it will move about. On the other hand, regular, moderate exercise is a key factor in the improvement of the signs of joint disease.

Cardiac and respiratory diseases

Diabetes mellitus – Overweight cats are six times more likely to develop diabetes mellitus compared to cats with an ideal body weight.

Poor coat and skin quality

Increased surgical and/or anesthetic risks

For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

What can I do?

Our Banfield team can help put your pet on a weight loss diet. Getting your pet to lose weight is not as easy as you might think, but together we can do it. We will be aiming for slow, consistent weight loss, and therefore, the weight loss diet and program will last several months. In some pets, it can take as long as 1 year to get them back to their healthy weight. Your veterinarian will not only define the ideal target weight for your pet, but will also prescribe the right weight loss food, and provide you with advice and tips for success.

We will ask you to drop by for a regular weight check-up and we will help you stay motivated until your pet has reached his or her healthy weight. We will then help you determine the right diet to maintain the healthy weight of your pet after the weight loss program.



What are the keys to success?

The success of your pet's weight loss relies on 5 essential factors:

- 1. Your motivation** – Your own personal involvement is a key factor in the success of your dog's or cat's diet. You are responsible for controlling his diet, treats, snacks and level of exercise. Without your determination to succeed, weight loss is impossible.
- 2. Diet** – It is important to replace the usual diet, (not appropriate during a weight loss period) with a low energy dense diet that has been specially designed for healthy weight loss. We also want to exclude all other foods and snacks, as these are often the key contributors to excess calories and caused the weight gain in the first place.
To achieve this:
 - Measure out the exact amount of food required each day, using the standard measuring cup that has been provided. This simple gesture is vital in controlling the amount of food your pet consumes.
 - Divide up this amount and spread it over two (or even three) meals throughout the day.
- 3. Exercise** – Encourage your pet to take some exercise: play with your dog or cat, take him out for regular walks and play games throughout the day, like hiding his food and getting him to look for it.
- 4. No snacks** – Give your pet nothing to eat other than his daily health food ration. No snacks, no left-over's. Reward him by taking him for a walk or playing games, or even save a few of his kibbles from each meal and use those as treats.
- 5. Rechecks** – It is important that you come into your Banfield hospital every two weeks to have your pet weighed. This weight will be recorded in the medical record and can also be recorded on the weight loss chart below. The veterinary team will review your progress and make any appropriate changes in diet, behavior or exercise as needed to make sure we achieve healthy weight loss.