



Pet Obesity

Obesity is one of the most common yet preventable health concerns in pets. Here are some tips to determine if your pet is overweight and to help prevent obesity.

WHAT IS OBESITY?

An animal is considered overweight when it weighs 10–20% more than what it should. Obesity means the animal has too much body fat and weighs more than 20% over its ideal weight. Being obese for a long time can change how your pet's body works and can hurt their health. That's why it's important to help your pet stay at a healthy weight and talk to your vet if you need help. Extra weight can make your pet feel worse and may lead to more trips to the vet.

Obesity can:

- Make it harder for animals to move, play or handle hot weather.
- Increase the chance of joint problems, like arthritis or injuries to tendons and ligaments.
- Raise the risk of getting diabetes.
- Cause liver problems, like fatty liver disease in cats.
- Slow down how fast animals heal from sickness or injuries.
- Make medical care and anesthesia riskier and more difficult.
- Shorten an animal's lifespan.

TIPS TO MANAGE WEIGHT

- Ask your vet for help choosing the best diet. Don't just reduce how much food your pet receives — this may lower their calories, but it can also affect their level of nutrients. Your pet may need special food for weight loss that has the right amount of nutrients, but less calories.
- Offer three or four smaller meals throughout the day rather than feeding twice a day.



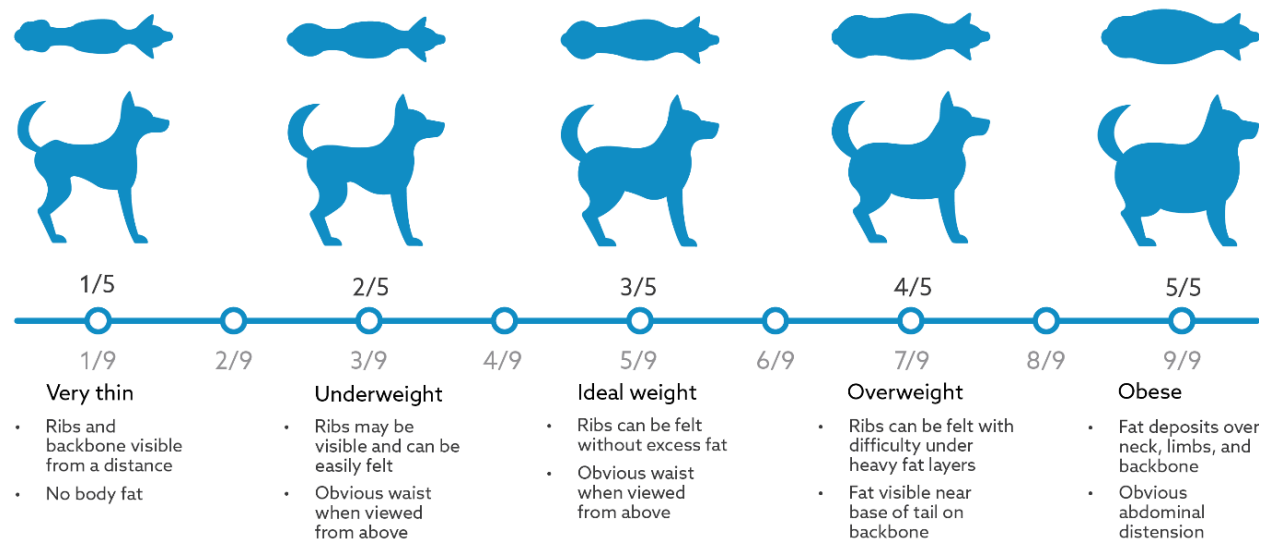
- Ask your household about how often they feed treats. You may be surprised to learn that *everyone* is giving your pet a few extra treats or table scraps each day!
- Measure food carefully by using a measuring cup or scale to make sure you're feeding the right amount each time.
- Keep treats securely hidden, and if your pet likes to have table scraps, keep them out of the area when you're cooking or eating.
- Encourage more activity in your pet's daily life by having more playtime, taking more walks, using puzzle feeders or hiding their food to have them search for it.

IS MY PET OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE?

One way to check if your pet's weight is healthy is by using something called a Body Condition Score (BCS). This is a scale from 1 to 9 that helps show if your pet is too thin, too heavy or just right. A score of 1 means very thin and a score of 9 means obese. The ideal score is 5. You can find more examples and pictures online, but here are simple versions using a dog and a cat to help you understand.

Body Condition Scoring Chart

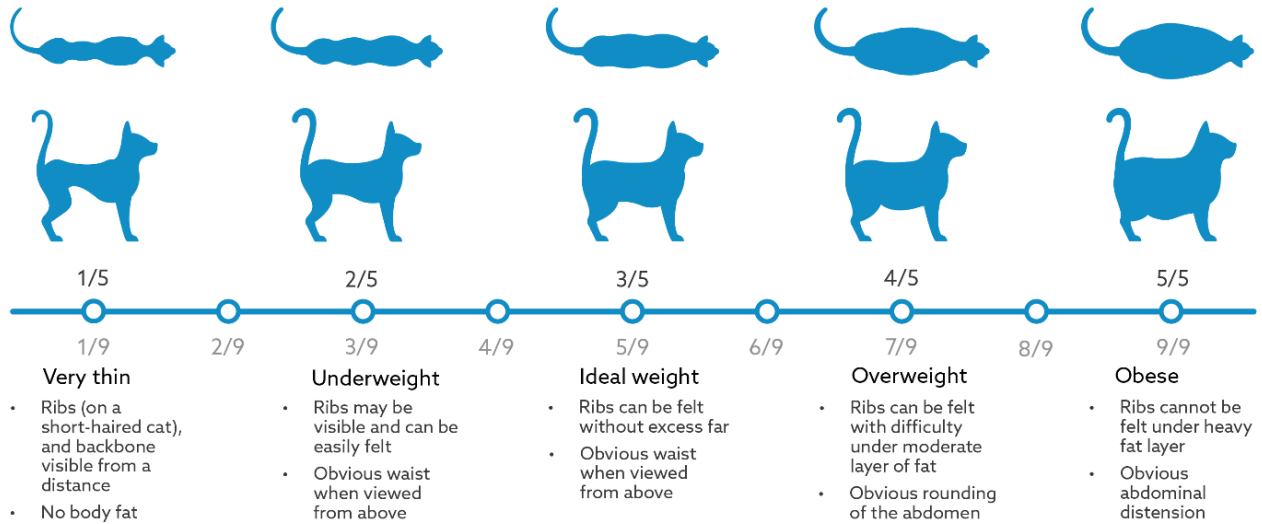
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Body Condition Scoring Chart

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