

Cuddly Pets

Has your pet had a good Christmas? Do they too need to lose a few pounds? Some animals carry a bit of extra weight and people may think that is how the breed is meant to look, or that it suits their pet and they are lovable that way. Below is just a summary of some of the causal factors for gaining weight, some of the side effects, and a few basic control measures to help lose a little weight.



Studies have shown that carrying extra weight can reduce the quality of a pet's life (reduced play activity and difficulty grooming etc) and reduce the life expectancy of a pet (by up to two years in certain studies). The reason for the latter is the increased incidence of certain diseases in overweight pets, such as the following:

- Diabetes
- Urinary problems
- Reproductive
- Cardiorespiratory
- Cancer
- Increased general anaesthetic risks

Causal Factors

Obviously overfeeding and low activity levels are involved in pets gaining weight, but there are other predisposing factors at times that can lead to weight gain. Some of these are listed below:

- **Breed** - Retrievers, Beagles, Cocker Spaniels, Rottweilers, Shetland Sheepdogs and mixed breeds of dog. Domestic medium and short-hair and Manx cats.
- **Age** - middle age and older. Therefore if a young pet gains weight, it is important to address as it will only get worse!
- **Neutering** - castrating and spaying can predispose to gaining weight, but with dietary control this can be well managed and remember neutering does have health benefits!

- **Coexisting health problems** - eg: osteoarthritis and respiratory problems may reduce a pet's exercise levels. Alternatively, hormonal problems such as hypothyroidism and Cushing's can cause weight gain, and need to be treated before weight can be lost safely.

None of the above means that weight gain has to be inevitable and with suitable intervention can be controlled very well.

What Can Be Done?

Obviously weight reduction generally involves changing the diet and lifestyle of the pet, but for dogs only there are medicines that can be used in difficult cases.

Changing lifestyle can involve simple techniques to increase energy expenditure. This can involve extra walks, running or swimming for dogs, and for cats can involve putting food in food balls (need to exercise to get food out), moving food bowls upstairs, increased time playing with the cat and having mechanised toys with timers for play throughout the day.

Other lifestyle changes may involve the way your pet is fed. Do they get treats and if so are they healthy and factored into their daily allowance? Do you accurately weigh out the food given? Is the food given as one meal? Feeding requires energy to digest the food so splitting meals into two to four a day will help.

Is the Type of Diet Important?

When losing weight, it is obviously best to lose fat tissue and not muscle tissue. If significant weight needs to be lost then feeding less of the usual diet will restrict calories but will reduce the protein and mineral levels as well. This will mean that the pet is slightly malnourished and weight loss might involve the loss of muscle tissue. The reduced volume may also mean your pet continually feels hungry.

Specific weight reducing diets are formulated to reduce the calories contained but have increased protein and other essentials to ensure that the pet has a balanced diet. This ensures that the weight lost is gradual, is fat tissue only, and your pet remains fit and well. The diets often contain increased fibre levels meaning that they will fill up your pet and hopefully avoid begging behaviour or the like.

Drugs

In the past couple of years two drugs have been introduced to aid weight loss in dogs only. These cannot be relied on long term and have specific regimes for their use, but are particularly effective in those tricky cases where weight loss isn't going well with other measures.

If you feel your pet needs to lose weight and you want any advice on any of the above, then feel free to speak to one of our clinic vet nurses who will be able to further assess your pet free of charge.

Lungworm – A New Concern



Angiostrongylus vasorum is the long name for heartworm, or can be termed lungworm. It is a worm that has been endemic in parts of Europe, South and West Africa and Australia, but is now endemic in South West England and South Wales. Cases have though been reported in South East England, so it is now considered to be all over the UK.

In the UK the reservoir of the worm is probably the fox. The fox excretes larvae in its faeces that are then ingested by slugs and snails. The larvae mature at this stage and if the slug/snail is inadvertently licked or eaten then the larvae can infect this pet. They cross the gut wall and eventually migrate to the right side of the heart and the associated vessels. At this point they can block the vessels, cause heart failure and lead to clotting and bleeding disorders. Treatment at this point can be very risky as all the dead worms released can also cause potentially fatal problems.

As always, prevention is better than cure. The use of **Advocate** as your routine monthly flea preventative will also aid control of this increasingly prevalent and potentially fatal worm as well as other gut, round, hook, and whip worms. Alternatively, you can remove all slugs and snails, but this is somewhat impossible!!!

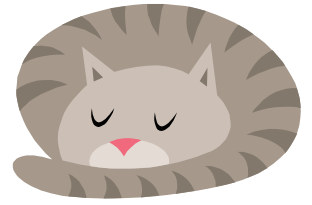


Behaviour and Socialisation Clinics

Every Wednesday evenings there is now a behaviour and socialisation clinic held between 7 and 9pm. The clinic is being run firstly for any client that is concerned that their pet has a behaviour problem. The second reason for the clinic is to provide a weekly socialisation clinic for any pets with phobias about coming to the vets. This is to allow pets to get used to visiting the practice and undergoing routine health examinations whilst undergoing a positive experience! For example training pets to undergo a clinical examination using food rewards. The weekly visit should hopefully reduce the level of anxiety of worried pets and therefore make consultations easier and more enjoyable for all concerned. Please book an appointment with reception or ask to speak to Lu if you have any questions.

Pet Health Plans

Our Pet Health Plans have been up and running for twelve months now and, in response to your feedback, we have simplified them. The plans now include vaccinations, parasite and worm treatments and blood tests*, saving our members in the region of 15% compared to pay as you go prices, with additional discounts on Hill's foods, consultations and other procedures, medications, dental treatments and laboratory work**.



Please ask about our health plans when you next visit us or telephone 0800 169 9958 for more information.

	Monthly Premium		Monthly Premium <10kg	Monthly Premium 10-20kg	Monthly Premium 21-40kg	Monthly Premium 40kg+		Monthly Premium
Kitten	£11	Puppy	£11	£12	£13	£14		
Adult Cat	£12	Adult Dog	£12	£14	£15	£18	Rabbit	£8
Older Cat	£14	Older Dog	£12	£14	£16	£18		

*Not rabbits
**Conditions apply

Mobile Surgery Timetable

NB: Instead of Morgans Vale Village Hall, we now visit The Old Inn at Woodfalls

Day	Location	Time
Monday	Winterslow	9am to 1pm
Tuesday	Whiteparish	9am to 1pm
Wednesday	Downton Woodfalls	9am to 10.30am 11am to 1pm
Thursday	Winterslow	9am to 1pm
Friday	Woodfalls Downton	9am to 10.30am 11am to 1pm
1 st Wednesday of Every Month	Bishopstone	2pm to 3pm



Following government medicines regulations that came into effect on 1 November 2005, we would like to advise you of the following changes:

Prescriptions are available from this practice. You may obtain Prescription Only Medicines, Category V, (POM Vs) from your veterinary surgeon or ask for a written prescription and obtain these medicines from another veterinary surgeon or a pharmacy.

Your veterinary surgeon may prescribe POM Vs only for animals under his or her care. A prescription may not be appropriate if your animal is an in-patient or immediate treatment is necessary.

You will be informed, on request, of the price of any medicine that may be prescribed for your animal.

The general policy of the Small Animal Department of this practice is to reassess an animal requiring repeat prescriptions every six months, but this may vary with individual circumstances. The standard charge for a re-examination is £16.00 during the day, £18.25 in the evenings or £22.25 at weekends.

The current prices for the ten POM Vs most commonly prescribed or supplied during a typical three month period are displayed in our waiting room. Further information on the prices of medicines is available on request.

From 1 November 2008, written prescriptions are £7.10 per item.

Repeat prescriptions are available at forty-eight hours' notice, Monday to Friday.