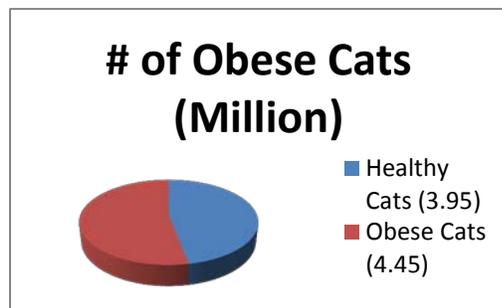
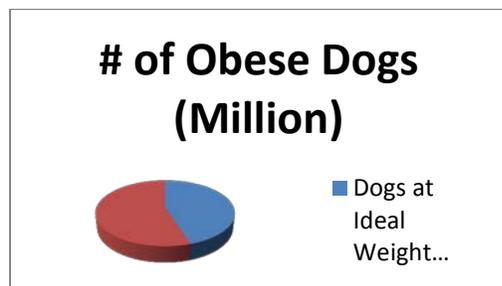




## Trending – Obesity in Pets

Pets are a popular household family member. In 2010 there were an estimated five million dogs and 8.4 million cats in Canada. Since owning a pet is gaining popularity, it is important to address pet health to maximize the wellbeing and lifespan of each animal.

Several health issues are on the rise in the dog and cat population. The largest threat to pets is the increase of obesity, and veterinarians and pet owners are concerned with this development.



\*These numbers are based on US pet obesity percentages (55% of dogs and 53% of cats). No Canadian percentages were known at the time this document was created.

Body weight over ideal conditions can fall into one of two categories:

**Overweight** means being 10-19% over the ideal body weight of the particular body size - *it does not relate to the amount of body fat alone.*

Overweight can also result from larger muscle mass, larger bone density, and too much water retention.

**Obesity** means the body has an excess amount of body fat to the point that movement and health are impacted – roughly 20-25% above the ideal body weight of the breed.

## How do we measure this?

The most common system of measuring obesity is the body condition scoring system (BCS). The BCS system ranges from 1-5, with the numbers corresponding to the following conditions:

1 = Underweight, 2 = Thin (appears healthy)  
3 = Normal, 4 = Overweight, 5 = Obese



\*Taken from

[http://www.canobolasvet.com/site/view/187249\\_Bodyconditionchart.pml](http://www.canobolasvet.com/site/view/187249_Bodyconditionchart.pml)

## Dogs

Some breeds are more at risk of developing obesity than other breeds due to their genetics.

### Did you know????

Boxers, Labrador Retrievers, King Charles Spaniels, Cocker Spaniels, Beagles, Dachshunds, and Basset Hounds are **all** at risk for developing obesity?



Obese dog – BCS 5



Dog at an ideal weight – ideal weight is different with every breed – BCS 3

### Did you know????

Obesity in dogs is related to obesity in their owners. – M.L. Nijland et al.

## What about Cats?

Fewer cat than dog breeds are at risk for developing obesity. The main cat breed at risk is the domestic shorthair.



Obese Cat – BCS 5



Cat at an ideal weight – about 10 lbs

### Did you know???

Daily caloric needs

10-lb. dog . . . . .	300 calories
20-lb. dog . . . . .	500 calories
50-lb. dog . . . . .	1,200 calories
10-lb. cat . . . . .	275 calories

## How can you determine if your pet is at risk?

Your pet is a healthy weight *IF*...

- ✓ The stomach doesn't sag
- ✓ The outline of a waist is noticed easily from above
- ✓ The ribs are easily felt

Your pet is overweight *IF* ...

- ✓ The stomach sags – easy to grab a handful of fat
- ✓ The back is broad and fat
- ✓ The waist not visible from above
- ✓ Ribs cannot be felt under the fat

### Did you know????

Treats have a high caloric content and should be kept to a minimum. Make sure to follow any recommendations on the packaging.

### Diseases associated with pet obesity:

- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Bladder problems
- ✓ Exercise intolerance
- ✓ Heat Intolerance
- ✓ Heart problems
- ✓ Difficult pregnancy and birth
- ✓ Thyroid problems
- ✓ Lowered immunity
- ✓ Respiratory problems
- ✓ Shortened lifespan

## What can you do?

It is quite simple for your pet to maintain a healthy weight. The animal's calorie/energy intake must equal their energy expenditure. Owners can ensure that they exercise their pets on a regular basis. Owners must also control the number of meals and portion sizes that they are feeding their pets

Neutering and spaying your pet can increase their risk for developing obesity – to combat this, exercise and proper diet is necessary.

For your pet to maintain a healthy weight look for food higher in protein and fiber, and lower in fat. This helps promote muscle growth and repair, as well as ensures proper digestion.

### Tips to decrease the risk of obesity

- ✓ When you are making yourself a snack, don't give in to those cute eyes begging you for food.
- ✓ Make exercising with your pet fun! Both you and your pet will benefit from the experience with better health and a stronger bond.
- ✓ One can also seek help for their pet through the use of pharmaceutical drugs – you **must** speak with your veterinarian regarding this treatment.

## Other Useful Sources of Information:

APOP: Association of Pet Obesity Prevention  
<http://www.petobesityprevention.com/>

PFAC: Pet Food Association of Canada  
<http://www.pfac.com/learn/industry/index.html>

National Academic Press  
[http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=15&page=42](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=15&page=42)

AAFCO: Association of American Feed Control Officials  
<http://www.petfood.aaeco.org/Home.aspx>

Pet Food Institute  
<http://www.petfoodinstitute.org/>

Agriculture & Agri-foods Canada  
[http://www.agr.gc.ca/index\\_e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.php)

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Created by Jessica Wilson

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