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How I Manage Obesity

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How I Manage Obesity

Angela Witzel, DVM, PhD, DACVN

Treating obesity

- 1) Formulate a weight loss plan
 - a. Rule out other medical conditions like hypothyroidism and Cushing's disease
 - b. Estimate current BCS and body fat %
 - i. Either use 5 or 9 point BCS scale
 - ii. New Body Fat Index system for overweight and obese patients
 - iii. Morphometric measurements
 - c. Estimate ideal body weight
 - i. Can use body weight at approximately 1 year of age (depends on breed size)
 - ii. Can use breed size charts to help with estimation
 - iii. Average female cat 7-10 lbs, male cat 9-12 lbs
 - iv. Often based on clinical experience
 - v. A weight history is helpful. Most animals are close to ideal at the onset of maturity (approximately one year of age).
 - d. Determine the current caloric intake through dietary history
 - i. Owners will forget, omit, lie etc.
 - ii. Food journals are helpful
 - iii. Most large pet food companies have calorie content on websites
 - iv. Sometimes impossible to accurately estimate food intake.
 - e. Calculate desired caloric intake
 - f. Implement an exercise plan
- 2) Feeding for weight loss
 - a. Two categories of weight-loss food
 - i. Over the counter light and lean products
 - ii. Prescription weight-loss diets
 - b. Benefits of weight loss foods
 - i. When a diet is reduced well below feeding recommendations, deficiencies in protein and nutrients can occur
 - ii. Weight loss diets are balanced to provide both adequate nutrients and energy restriction
 - iii. Less calorically dense -the ability to digest and absorb food is inversely proportional to the amount of food eaten
 - c. Feline weight loss diets
 - i. Canned foods seem more satiating in cats
 - ii. "Catkins" diets
 1. Low carbohydrate, high protein diets – designed to mimic natural carnivorous diet of cats
 2. Dry forms are very dense in calories
 3. Canned forms are about average in caloric density
 - iii. Traditional higher fiber diets
 1. Less calorically dense
 - d. How much to feed?
 - i. Calculate the resting energy requirements (RER) using one of the following formulas:

$$70 \times \text{BodyWeight}_{\text{kg}}^{0.75} \quad \text{or} \quad [(30 \times \text{BW}_{\text{kg}}) + 70]$$

The equation raised to the 0.75 power is more accurate. The linear equation can be used in animals between about 6-60 pounds. Example:

$$5 \text{ kg cat} - 70 \times 5^{.75} = 70 \times 3.34 = 234 \text{ kcal/day or } (30 \times 5) + 70 = 150 + 70 = 220 \text{ kcal/day}$$

Resting energy requirements should be calculated using IDEAL weight, NOT current weight. You can then calculate a patient's daily energy requirements by multiplying by a lifestage factor for weight loss. Daily energy needs = Lifestage factor x RER.

- ii. Dogs – usually feed at 1.0 to 1.2 times resting energy requirements
 - iii. Cats – usually feed at 0.8 to 1.0 times resting energy requirements
- 3) Monitoring
- a. Recheck in two weeks to determine if losing weight too fast, too slow, or if there are other concerns
 - b. **Ideally, weight loss will be 1-2% of body weight per week**

Calculation: divide the weight lost by the weight on the last visit. That gives total percent lost. Then divide by the number of weeks since the recheck and multiply by 100.

Example: 15 pound dog lost 0.8 pounds in two weeks and now weighs 14.2 pounds.

$$0.8/15 = 0.053 \qquad 0.053/2 \text{ weeks} = 0.026 \times 100 = 2.6\% \text{ per week}$$

- c. Weigh-in monthly if two-week recheck is good