

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT FAQs



Why are you so concerned with these few extra pounds my pet has gained?

Dogs and cats who are just 15% overweight have a two year shorter life expectancy. The more overweight the pet, the shorter the lifespan. Overweight pets develop arthritis two years earlier. The consequences can also include:

- Intervertebral disc disease (slipped discs), torn ACL ligaments
- Skin infections, anal sac disease
- Cancer, lipomas (fatty tumors)
- Pancreatitis, diabetes, cardiorespiratory diseases, periodontal disease

Overweight cats have much higher risk for diabetes than dogs do. Instead of ACL surgery, you are likely to be treating for diabetes and pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas).

My pet gains weight in the winter but loses it during the summer. Doesn't that make it less of a problem?

Each time your pet loses weight the metabolic rate decreases. After several years of gain and lose you will find your pet gains weight more and more easily while eating less and less food. This cycle will lead to either permanent weight gain that no longer goes away in the summer, or to protein deficiency, because the pet is maintaining its weight on a very small amount of food. Cut back your dog's food in the fall if he is less active over the winter!

Can't I just cut back on my pet's regular food? Why do you want me to buy this expensive prescription diet?

We recommend prescription diets for weight loss because protein deficiency malnutrition and calcium/phosphorus imbalance is inevitable when an over-the-counter diet is used for weight loss. Prescription weight loss diets have extra protein and minerals, so weight is lost safely without the loss of muscle mass due to protein deficiency. We want your pet to lose fat, not muscle and bone.

You want me to spend how much for a bag of pet food???

Weight loss is the most effective form of pain management we have. Think of the real cost of the diseases that are linked to obesity – the increased cost of continuing to be overweight can be huge. Arthritis is the most common problem we see. Two years of arthritis medication (Dasuquin and generic carprofen) at today's prices =

- Small dog or cat \$520
- Medium dog \$960
- Large dog \$1422

Blood testing to monitor for medication side effects, assuming basic wellness screening is already being done annually, adds \$70. The cost of Hip x-rays with anesthesia is \$300 or so.

The cost of ACL surgery \$3000 per knee. When one ACL tears the other often follows. The cost of rehab following ACL surgery = about \$500 per knee.

For cats, diabetes is also a major risk. The cost of treating and monitoring a diabetic cat varies, but you can expect to spend at least \$1000 the first year after diagnosis.

What's the true cost?

Spending \$220 more over two years for a prescription diet versus an OTC one is far less than what you will spend to treat arthritis. It's a real bargain when compared to an ACL surgery or hip replacement. (In fact, 80% of dogs evaluated for hip replacement no longer need it once they lose weight.)

The Cost of Prescription weight loss diet

12 large bags of canine R/D (1 bag every other month) = \$600

The cost of over-the-counter dog food

12 large bags of over-the-counter dog food (1 bag every other month) = \$360

Caring People Helping Pets

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