

Obesity in dogs



It is often difficult for us to see that our own pet is overweight. The weight gain is so gradual that we hardly notice the change. In most cases it will be your friend or a vet who points out the problem. If the weight gain is allowed to continue your dog may start to develop diseases as a result.

Obesity makes it more likely that your dog will suffer from some medical conditions including skin problems. All obese animals are unfit and the extra weight they are carrying puts an unnecessary strain on their joints and heart.

Obese dogs are often not very active because it is quite hard work for them to run around. Taking your dog for regular walks (even if the weather is not very pleasant) may help. Some dogs will play with toys, particularly when they are young. Increasing exercise should be used in conjunction with a controlled diet. In most cases, reducing dietary intake to two-thirds of what your dog was eating should permit a steady weight loss. Weight loss should be gradual - over 3-4 months. If weight is lost too rapidly it is more likely to be regained at the end of the dieting period.



Overweight dogs will often suffer from stiff joints due to the excess weight. This can become a huge issue if not treated quickly. Care must be taken when exercising these dogs as moving around too much can increase the strain, for this reason we recommend walking your overweight animals for a short periods throughout the day.

A veterinary nurse can weigh your dog for you and calculate how much weight he needs to lose. Once you know your dog's target weight it is up to you to ensure that he sticks to the plan your vet has devised.

Both our hospital in Axminster and branch practice in Seaton have weighing scales so it should be possible for you to arrange a convenient time for you to take your dog along and weigh him yourself.

A number of low calorie prescription diets are available from us. If you are finding it impossible to get your dog to lose weight discuss the possibility of a low calorie diet with a veterinary nurse in the hospital.



We offer 'weight watcher' consults for pets. You can take your dog along at regular intervals to be weighed and a nurse will be on hand to answer any questions or give advice.

Maintaining a normal bodyweight is an important part of keeping your dog healthy. It is not possible to recommend a single diet that will be suitable for all dogs. If you are in any doubt about your dog's weight, ask your vet or nurse to help you plan diet tailored for your dog's needs.

If you have any queries regarding your dog's weight please call 01297 630500 to speak to a veterinary nurse for advice.

Paws for thoughts

We are in the final stages of developing our online shop, links to the shop can be found on our website www.coombefieldvets.co.uk



Obesity in Rabbits

Obesity is a condition commonly seen in companion animals including rabbits and can have a significant effect on your rabbit's health. Some of the conditions thought to be of increased risk include:

- Urine scalding
- Cystitis
- Fly strike
- Hepatic Lipidosis
- High blood pressure
- Heart Disease



Similar to other companion animals, incorrect diet and insufficient exercise are the main causes of obesity. Rabbits are selective eaters and in the wild there are many different types of plants available allowing them to forage for a variety of foods to maintain their nutritional requirements. The majority (80%) of the diet should be made up of a good quality hay and grass therefore ensuring that they obtain the correct amount and types of fibre they require.

Commercial foods should only make up a small proportion of their diet and be provided as a source of vitamins and minerals. Pellet style foods are best as this prevents selective eating. This is where they pick out the parts of the food that they enjoy eating such as the sugar filled ingredients for their “glucose fix”. Selective eating can not only be a causal factor to obesity but it can also lead to an imbalanced diet lacking in calcium, phosphorus, vitamin D and fibre.

Vegetables and treats are great for providing enrichment and variation in a rabbit's diet but should care should be taken as to what is given and in what quantity. However, not all fruit and vegetables are good for rabbits. Examples of good greens include kale, spinach and Savoy cabbage but root vegetables such as carrots or fruit are high in sugar and therefore should only be given on occasions as treats.

As for exercise, rabbits are most active at dawn and dusk, so it is recommended that they are allowed to run around a secure room or garden twice a day for at least 30minutes. Hopping and jumping should also be encouraged as these are natural behaviours.

If you think that your rabbit is overweight or would just like him or her checked then please contact the hospital on 01297630500 as the nurses run regular clinics.



In other news....

Have EWE HERD the farm department and equine clinic have MOOVED? From Monday the 20th of February the offices will be located at Summerleaze Farm, Kilmington, EX13 7RA. The farm and equine office hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 1pm. The telephone number is 01297 630515 during office hours and 01297 630500 for out of hours enquires.

