

HAS YOUR PET PILED ON THE POUNDS? Help them get slimmer, healthier and happier in 2019



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The festive season can leave us all feeling a little bit plumper than we might like and it seems that our pets are no different!

The titbits from the table, left-over turkey, chunks of cheese and of course the tasty gifts we like to treat our pets to at Christmas, all take their toll on a pet's weight. Whilst it's lovely to indulge your pet once in a while, repeatedly treating or feeding them food designed for humans can have significant implications for their weight and ultimately, their overall health. Overweight pets are more likely to suffer with joint and mobility problems, respiratory issues and Diabetes, which can considerably shorten life expectancy.

So, if you've noticed that your pet is looking a little larger these days, what can you do? The good news is that expert help is at hand. Blacks Vets offer pet weight loss clinics at our branches in Dudley, Lye and Oldbury, where we help

dogs, cats and rabbits slim down to their optimum healthy weight.

Clinics are run by our friendly nursing team who have an in-depth knowledge of pet nutrition and exercise and can put together an effective plan with realistic, achievable weight loss goals.

An initial clinic appointment begins with establishing case history and the pet's current diet and exercise regime. This allows us to gain valuable insight into how your pet's weight gain has occurred. Often, pets can put on weight in the three months after neutering, so it is important to adjust their food intake to balance this. Sometimes, clients are unaware of how much fat is contained in favourite treats or may simply be offering too much food at each mealtime.

Our experienced nurses are full of advice and ideas for supporting you and your pet on their weight loss journey. For example, we know that cats are not social eaters and may overeat through stress when fed alongside other cats. Starting good feeding habits in early life can also help combat obesity in later years. We recommend that puppy and kitten bowls are never filled to the brim and that portion sizes are always properly measured out. We also advise clients with more than one pet not to leave food bowls down for a prolonged period, as this can give the opportunity for an enthusiastic eater to tuck into an extra portion! Try leaving bowls down for 10- 15 minutes before removing until the next mealtime.

Introducing more exercise into your pet's health regime is also a surefire



way to help whittle the pounds away. As well as regular walks for dogs, you could try introducing games and toys that require chasing or jumping such as fetching a ball. Cats and dogs may benefit from puzzle toys where treats are hidden inside a cube that needs movement to release the food.

At your first clinic appointment, our nurses will assess your pet and determine a Body Condition Score. This is a visual check that grades pets from 1 (very thin) to 9 (obese). This is done by reviewing key markers such as rib prominence, face, neck and abdomen to build an overall picture of your pet's weight and help tailor a diet and exercise plan that meets their needs. We then work with you to choose an achievable weight loss target which is recorded in your pet's own log book so that you can keep track of progress. There is lots of support available along the way so that you never need to feel unsure or concerned about the process. We give lots of helpful guidance to help you understand portion size, number of meals and when and how to give treats to your pet. We may also recommend a change in pet food which can be bought or ordered in branch. Members of our fantastic Protect My Pet Club receive a discount on our vet-recommended nutrition range, so it's kind to your pocket too!

CASE STUDY

Meet adorable Pug, Roxy, shown here on the left accompanied by her son. Roxy was referred to our Weight Loss clinic by one of our vet team, following BOAS surgery to help her breathing. This is a common procedure in Brachycephalic breeds such as Pugs and Bulldogs, which are characterised by their flat faces. Following an initial nurse consultation where we discussed her eating and exercise habits, Roxy was put on a plan of measured portions of pet kibble and limited healthy treats. Within 2 weeks she had lost half a kilo and was much more energetic and playful. Her breathing was also greatly improved giving her a better quality of life. Well done Roxy, we are really proud of you!

If you would like help and advice on your pet's weight, feel free to contact our friendly team at your nearest Blacks Vets branch. We have practices across the Black Country in Dudley, Lye, Oldbury, Sedgley and Quinton. You can find our details by visiting www.blacksvets.co.uk



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- One additional FREE veterinary consultation

*Terms and conditions may apply.

