

AUGUST FEATURE



APPLE GROVE
VETERINARY CARE
Small & Large Animal Medicine and Surgery

HEALTHY WEIGHT

Hello Apple Grove Veterinary Care Clients! During the month of August our team will be working diligently to promote healthy weight for pets. If your pet is overweight, give us a call today to participate in a free "Biggest Loser Challenge". Through the challenge, you will learn what you can do to help your pet lose weight, and we will track the progress, and encourage you along the way.

Obesity is the number one health concern among dogs and cats today. Nearly 35% of dogs and cats are overweight, which can lead to serious health concerns, and fewer years with their owners. Pets that are overweight are more likely to suffer with problems like: diabetes, arthritis and other joint disorders, heart disease, high blood pressure, and skin problems. These health problems may not have any warning signs, so regular physical exams with the doctors at Apple Grove is essential.

Restricting a pet's caloric intake is the first step to dealing with obesity. The staff at Apple Grove Veterinary Care can help you develop a strict diet that will get your pet on track to lose weight. Measuring food daily and restricting treats is a simple recipe for weight loss success.

A pet's caloric needs sometimes changes over the years too; the amount of food that was fed to your trim year old dog may be much more than the dog needs later in life. For example, I recently had to put my dog Hally on a diet. Hally had been trim and fit since she was a pup, but when she turned 3 years old I noticed she no longer had a waist; looking at her from above she was one width from her chest back to her hips. As she is aging, she is less active on a daily basis, and uses fewer calories; therefore I had to cut her measured amount of food from 4 cups daily to 3 cups, so her calories consumed were more appropriate with her calories burned with activity. After several months of restriction, Hally once again has a waist, but she is a good example of how you as the owner need to always should monitor your pet's body condition.

Combating obesity in pets requires a lifestyle change for you and your pet. Not only is diet an important change to make but, adding physical activity to a pet's routine is essential. Exercise is the best method of ensuring that the energy expended is greater than the number of calories consumed. Because exercise requires energy, restricted calories combined with exercise forces the body to use stored fat, and therefore lose weight. Even with a busy schedule it is possible to incorporate exercise into your pet's schedule. It only takes 20 minutes 3-5 times weekly to make a difference for your pet.

I'm encouraging you to participate in this free "Biggest Loser Challenge", if your pet is overweight! After all, obesity isn't just something that affects how your pet looks- it affects how your pet lives!! Hope to see you all soon!

Christie, LVT

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