



Weight Management program

Overweight pets are on the rise! According to Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. (www.petinsurance.com), 40% of American household pets are overweight. Pets that are 10 to 15% above the ideal weight are considered obese. Causes for overweight and obese pets include overeating, inappropriate diet, lack of exercise, and such medical conditions as hypothyroidism. As for

people, obesity can significantly reduce the life expectancy and the quality of life of our pets. Health risks associated with obesity are similar to the risks in people : heart disease, mobility problems, breathing problems, diabetes, and arthritis.

How to determine if your pet is overweight? Ribs should be palpable with a gentle touch, but not visible and the waist clearly visible from above.

What can you do? To be successful in a weight loss program, a multi approach is essential. Diet is only one component of the program. Your veterinarian can sit with you and set up a program designed especially for your pet including goals to achieve. It is very important to have your pet's health evaluated before starting the program. Some possible health issues, such as hypothyroidism, need to be ruled out first. The program will include a special diet food with restrictions for treats, an exercise plan and a regular evaluation of the progress. A successful program involves the owner's commitment to follow the program.

Which diet to use and how much? A weight loss goal should be based on ideal body weight. All major brands of food have special diets for weight loss; Eukanuba offers their "Restricted Calories", Science Diet offers their "R/D". Light diets in pet stores or groceries are not designed to loss weight but rather to maintain the weight. The quantity of food to be given should be as recommended by the Company's instructions for the weight to achieve. Feed small meals, no free choice. Use praises rather than treats. Fiber is beneficial for increased satiety without caloric intake; carrots and apples are great treats if needed. A supplement of L-carnitine is appropriate during weight loss to help increase lean body mass and decrease excess body fat. The maintenance energy requirement can also be calculated. Gradual weight loss is slow but helps to avoid the yo-yo effect. Ideally, the patient should loose 1% body weight per week. See charts: optimal Weight Loss Planner.





Fitness program



Which services can PetMedSpa and Rehabilitation center offer to my pet and me?

PetMedSpa can implement the fitness program designed by one of our veterinarians. Physical assessment of your pet will be done and blood work might be recommended to rule out possible medical problems. Our veterinarians may recommend a specific diet and help you calculate the amount to be fed. They can also help you find the appropriate treats and teach you how to balance treats with the daily food ratio. One of the most important things that PetMedSpa can offer your pet and you is the exercise component. Aqua therapy is very well known to be the best exercise in a fitness program. Enroll your pet for 2 or 3 sessions of aqua therapy per week. When your pet becomes more fit, aqua therapy can be replaced by physical activities at home.

Many owners may have problems finding the time for their pet's fitness program. PetMedSpa offers daycare (half-day and full-day) during which you can request exercise activities such as swimming and the underwater treadmill. Then, at the end of the day, you can spend quiet, quality time with your pet confident that he has received the proper exercise to fulfill his fitness program. A daily report card about accomplished activities will be provided to you. A chart monitoring your pet's weight loss will also be provided.

