



Groupe Vétérinaire MONVET Inc.

FELINE WEIGHT LOSS GUIDE



WEIGHT LOSS

Caloric needs

Like people, cats need fuel to go about their daily activities (e.g.: sleeping, walking, running, playing, climbing, etc.). This fuel refers to the calories present in their food.

Caloric needs vary from one cat to another depending on their weight, body build and amount of physical activity they do during the day. When the amount of calories ingested is equal to the amount expended, the cat's weight stays the same.

What is obesity?

Obesity is an excess weight due to an increase in adipose tissue (fat). This accumulation of fat occurs when the cat consumes more calories than he spends.

A cat is considered to be obese when he weighs more than 15%-20% than his ideal body weight. In comparison, a 3 lbs excess in a cat is equal to a 45 lbs excess in a human. Today, it is estimated that about 35% of cats are obese.

Why are so many cats obese?

Because obese cats are often bored, eat too much and do not exercise enough. It is the case, in particular, for cats that don't go outside. Sleeping and eating are the sole activities, or almost, they do during the day.

Since these cats' food is often available all the time and too easily accessible, in an ordinary bowl, they do not have to make any effort, nor have to spend any energy, to find their food, contrary to cats that live outside.

This way of feeding cats is opposite to how cats naturally feed themselves. Indeed, cats are carnivores who, in the wild, hunt for 8 to 12 hours each day to capture the 10 to 15 preys they need to eat to fulfill their nutritional needs.

Cats are thus programmed to eat small amounts of food, many times during the day. They are not adapted to eat big meals at once. Furthermore, many commercial diets, especially the dried ones, contain much more carbohydrates than cats' normal diet, which is high in proteins and low in carbohydrates.

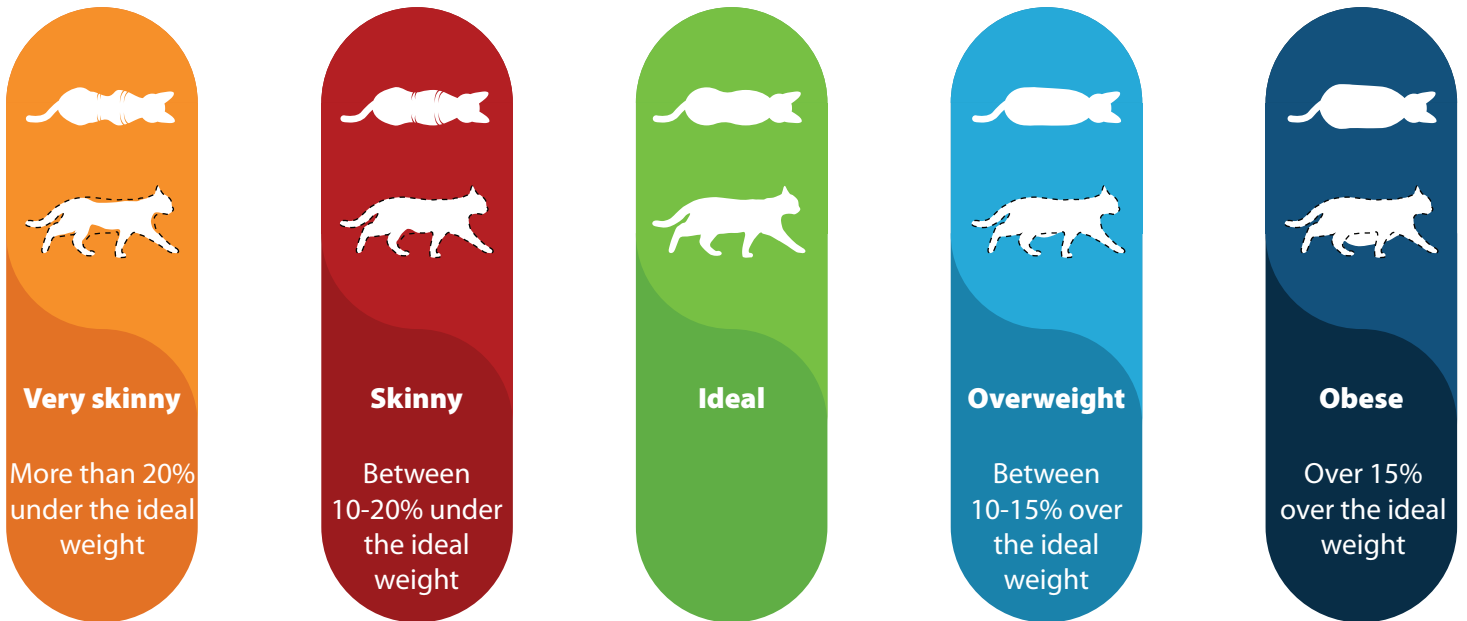
Although many cats will naturally eat small meals often, many cats are gluttons and will continue to eat until their bowl is empty. These cats are usually the ones that gain too much weight and become obese.

Finally, in addition to their basic food, cats often eat large amounts of highly caloric treats that are sources of extra calories.



Figure 1. Medium size (4,5 kg) cats' approximate daily caloric needs at rest (205 kcal/day).

WEIGHT LOSS



Considering that the number of calories a cat ingests every day as "treats" should not exceed 10% of his daily caloric needs, it is easy to see that this limit is reached quickly.



4,5 kg

205
Kcal/day



Greek fat free yogurt (175 g)
Entre 110 et 170 kcal



1% milk (250 ml)
110 kcal



Smoked salmon (100 g)
117 kcal



White bread (32 g)
87 kcal



Canned tuna (100 g)
106 kcal



Pork sausage (100 g)
378 kcal

Figure 2. Amount of calories per 100 g (approximately ¼ lb) of a few treats enjoyed by cats

WEIGHT LOSS

Obesity: More than just an esthetic issue!

The WHO (World Health Organization) recognizes obesity as being a disease since 1997.

We now know that obesity can be detrimental to cats' health, just like that of humans'. In fact, obesity increases their risk of developing other diseases, which also can have a negative impact on their quality of life and life expectancy.



WEIGHT LOSS

Losing weight

To lose weight, cats need to burn off more calories than they ingest. Thus, they should exercise more and not eat too much.

$$\text{WEIGHT LOSS} = \text{CALORIES SPENT} > \text{CALORIES INGESTED}$$

Exercises

Exercising is good for cats' physical health: it promotes a healthy weight loss by reducing their amount of body fat and by developing their muscle mass.

Your cat can exercise in many different ways, by himself or with you, by:

- climbing in a cat tree or on shelves fixed to the walls;
- searching for treats hidden all over the house;
- running in an exercise wheel;
- playing with a cat teaser or with other toys;
- using an interactive feeder to eat.



Cat tree



Cat teaser



Hiding place

NUTRITION

Food

There are two types of cat food on the market intended for weight management: light and weight reduction. Light foods are designed to maintain weight. They are available wherever pet food is sold. Weight reduction diets, on the other hand, are indicated for weight loss and are sold solely in veterinary clinics.

It is **ESSENTIAL** that a cat's weight loss program be supervised by a veterinarian. Otherwise, weight loss diets can be dangerous for his health.

Before starting the diet, the cat should be examined to determine:

- if he gained too much weight because he eats too much or because he suffers from a disease that makes him gain weight;
- if he is healthy and therefore can eat the weight loss food safely;
- his caloric needs, using proven mathematical formulas, that take into account his build, size, lifestyle and amount of daily exercise he does;
- the ideal weight that he needs to reach;
- the exact amount of food he should eat each day.



Light foods should not be used to make cats lose weight, because if the portions of these types of food are reduced too much, it can lead to nutritional deficiencies.

Weight reduction foods (e.g.: Hill's® Prescription Diet Metabolic®), however, are specially designed to make pets lose weight. In addition to controlling their appetite, these foods improve their metabolism and help them burn fat while preserving their muscle mass.

It is important to remember that your cat will continue to gain weight and/or not lose enough of it if he eats too much, even if what he eats is a weight reduction food.

Does your cat have to lose weight, but also need to eat a special food to control his allergies or prevent urinary problems from recurring?

Speak to his veterinarian. He or she can suggest a mixed diet that is both slimming and hypoallergenic, or slimming and protective of the urinary tract at the same time.



Treats

Good news! Your cat can still have treats while being on his weight loss program. However, you need to choose a good quality one that is tasty and low in calories.

Do not hesitate to ask an animal health technician for help in finding a treat adapted to your cat's needs. He or she can also determine precisely how much he's allowed to eat daily.

NUTRITION

Canned food

Many people think that canned food is more fattening than dry food. On the contrary! Not only are wet foods less caloric than dry foods, but the water present in canned foods takes up space in a cat's stomach, which satisfies his hunger faster than dry food would.

Interactive feeders

Interactive feeders are objects into which kibbles or treats can be placed. The goal for the cat is to figure out a way to retrieve and eat them. These feeders offer many benefits, both on a physical and mental level.

By using these interactive feeders to eat, cats maintain and lose their extra weight more easily because they:

- move more;
- eat small quantities of food at a time, which prevents large amounts of sugar from accumulating in their blood at once and then be transformed into fat;
- eat more slowly, which promotes a better digestion and a feeling of fullness.



Interactive feeders also help with behavior. Indeed, they stimulate cats' intellectual faculties and reproduce, to a certain extent, hunting conditions found outside, which is especially advantageous for indoor cats.

A variety of models are available: holed balls and cylinders that need to be pushed around for the food to come out, vertical cylinders, etc.

Pipolino®

Aikiou® Cat treat mouse toys

SlimCat™ Interactive Feeder Cat Toy

Catit® Senses 2.0 Food Tree

Catit® Senses 2.0 Digger

Be One Breed™ Food Distributor Toys



Memory aid

The following checklist can help you keep your cat's weight ideal or optimize his weight loss:

- Did he exercise today?
- Did I weigh his food?
- Am I sure that he eats the correct amount of food?
- Did he use his interactive feeder to eat?
- Did he climb in his cat tree?



OUR WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

How does it work?

First, we will give you a questionnaire with questions pertaining to your cat's diet and daily amount of exercise he does.

When you are finished filling it out, an animal health technician will analyze the answers. Then, he or she will determine the type and amount of food you need to give to your cat, taking into account his weight, body score and amount of physical activities he should do every day. He or she will also establish a schedule to monitor his weight loss.



Medical follow-up

Cats should lose 1% of their body weight each week.

A medical follow-up during this period is essential to:

- adjust the quantity of food, if your cat loses weight too fast or not fast enough;
- determine the right time to stop the weight loss diet and change to a maintenance diet;
- calculate the precise amount of food he needs to eat. Your cat should be weighed regularly for a few months after the end of the weight loss program to make sure he doesn't gain back the weight he lost.

It's possible, when we weigh your cat for the first time after the start of his weight loss program, that he will not have lost weight. Indeed, he might even have gained a little bit of weight. Do not worry: it is a normal adaptation period.

Closing words

As you can see, this document is rich in information about the dangers of obesity and how important it is for your cat to lose excess weight and maintain his ideal weight afterwards.

We hope you take advantage of the tips and resources contained in this guide to help your companion lose weight safely and happily.

HEALTH RECORD

					
Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____
Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____

Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____	Weight (kg): _____
Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
					

Pet's size chart

Where would you put your cat on this chart?



Weight and body score

- Pet's actual weight: _____
- Pet's target ideal weight: _____
- Body score: /9
- Muscular mass

☐ Normal

☐ Slight loss

☐ Moderate loss

☐ Severe loss

NUTRITIONAL EVALUATION

Section to be completed by the owner

• Cat's name: _____ Breed: _____
• Age: _____ Neutered or not: _____ Date: _____

Nutrition

What type of food(s) does your cat eat?

- ☐ Kibbles. Which brand(s)? _____ How much per day? _____
☐ Moist. Which brand(s)? _____ How much per day? _____
☐ Home-cooked meals
☐ Raw food



Does he eat treats?

• What kind(s)? _____ How much per day? _____

Do you give him nutritional supplements (e.g. vitamins, glucosamine, fatty acids, etc.)?

• What kind(s)? _____ How much per day? _____



Exercises

Does your cat exercise? How often?

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Many times a day | ☐ Once a day | ☐ 2-3 times a day | ☐ Once a week |
| ☐ Once a month | ☐ Occasionally | ☐ Never | |

How long does each exercise session last?

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| ☐ Less than 15 minutes | ☐ 15-30 minutes | ☐ 30 min - 1 hour | ☐ More than 1 hour |
| ☐ Variable | | | |

Does he go outside?

- ☐ No ☐ On the balcony ☐ Attached in the backyard ☐ Free in the backyard ☐ Completely free

NUTRITIONAL EVALUATION

Section to be completed by the veterinary or the animal health technician

Nutrition recommendations

Food

- Brand(s): _____
- Quantities per day: _____
Kibbles: _____ cup(s) or _____ gram(s)
Moist: _____ can(s) of _____ oz/g
- Number of meals per day: _____

Treats

- Brand(s): _____
- Quantities per day: _____

Interactive feeding toys

- Name(s): _____

Exercise recommendations

- Which one(s): _____
- Session(s) duration: _____
- Number of session(s) per day/week: _____

Follow-up recommendation

- Schedule an appointment with an animal health technician to have your cat weighed once a month.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____





Groupe Vétérinaire MONVET Inc.

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Certain services are not available for all animal species nor in all our locations.

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