



Fitness Check for Pets

An ounce of prevention...is worth a pound of cure

This has never been truer. Our goal is for your “best friend” to live a long and healthy life. Here’s a tip to help assure that happens.

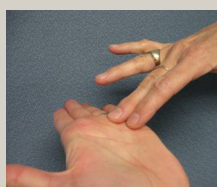
Many pet parents can tell if their pet is obese but what they might not realize is that our pets can suffer from weight-related problems long before they become *obese*. Especially in our canine companions, studies have shown that as little as 15% over their healthy ideal weight can shorten their lives by up to 2 years! Being just a little overweight can accelerate the development of painful joints, lameness and the progression of arthritis and the need for pain meds to live a comfortable life. If feline friends become portly, it increases their risk for developing diabetes, breathing problems, and arthritis.

There are simple ways to **prevent unhealthy weight gain** before the damage is done and it’s alot easier than trying to lose weight later.

- Talk to your veterinary healthcare team about food recommendations when your pet is spayed or neutered. Your pet’s nutritional needs change and they require 25% fewer calories after surgery.
- Learn to do a body condition score (BCS) and check your pet’s BCS once a month and maintain a healthy 5/9 by feeling over their ribs.



Lightly run your fingers over your knuckles as you make a fist. If you imagine those knuckles were your dog/cat’s ribs, this would be too thin.



Put your palm up, fingers extended facing the ceiling. Run your fingers over the base of your fingers - this is too heavy.



Turn your hand over, palm down and feel over your knuckles. When your pet’s ribs feel like this, it’s just right - healthy lean BCS 5/9!

- Generally, your pet’s body weight at one year of age is close to their healthy weight and you can use that as a guide to keep them healthy.

Talk with your pet’s healthcare team to discuss questions you have about choosing the right food and making sure your pet keeps a fit body condition for a healthier life.

For more information, please visit www.umnvets.com or call us at 612-626-VETS (8387).