



Nazli has been overfed and underexercised, putting her health in danger.

Obesity in Pets

By Angie Casazza, DVM

Obesity in pets is the most common nutritional disorder in the western world, and is increasing every day. According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, 44% of dogs and 57% of cats are overweight or obese. Obesity in pets causes many of the same problems people experience: diabetes, arthritis, hypertension, breathing problems, heart problems, and more. Minor issues might include skin problems when pets are unable to groom properly. The longer a pet is overweight, the greater the chance that a negative consequence will occur.

To determine if your pet is at a good weight, gently rub back and forth along your pet's ribs. The skin should move easily and you should be able to feel the ribs. Looking down on your pet, you should see a tucked in waist behind the ribcage. With a fluffy dog or cat, run your hands along its sides towards the tail. When your hands come off of the ribs, you should feel a waist.

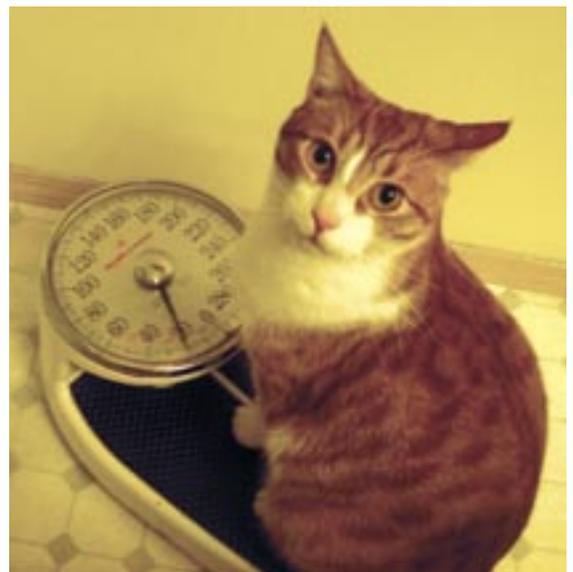
If you suspect your pet needs to lose weight, the best place to begin is with a visit to your veterinarian. A veterinarian can help determine if any health issues exist that might require particular lifestyle changes. You can

discuss food options, goals, and strategies for weight loss and management. If you are concerned about your cat, it is especially important that you work with your veterinarian to develop a healthy weight loss plan. Crash diets can lead to life-threatening medical conditions, so gradual weight loss is critical.

Three key components in a good weight loss and management program are: food and feeding, exercise, and periodic weigh-ins with body condition evaluation. Your veterinarian can recommend appropriate food and amount to feed for safe, controlled weight loss. If the recommended food is new to your pet, transition gradually from the original food to the new food in order to allow your pet time to adjust and reduce chances of an upset stomach.

Remember that treats also have calories! Instead of giving treats, show your love for your pet by petting, brushing, and playing with it. When you do want to give a reward, use a small, low calorie treat or a piece of their regular diet food. For dogs, use vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, or celery as treats.

Exercise is important for weight loss and maintaining healthy weight. Start slowly and increase gradually. Appropriate, safe exercise will vary based on your pet's age, health status, and fitness level. Ask your veterinarian for suggestions. For dogs, a 20 to 30 minute brisk walk, romp at the dog park, training class, or "play-date" with dog friends can be very beneficial. For cats, playing with a "cat dancer" toy several times a day adds exercise and environmental enrichment. Feed your cat on an elevated surface (something safe for your cat to hop onto), or split the meal into multiple small portions placed in different areas around the house, so the cat expends energy getting to the food.



*Continued
on page 6*

Macaroni, surprised to find he weighs 21 lb. No more night-time snacks for Big

The Kitty Corner

Once again kitten season is upon us! While kittens can be born year-round, the flood starts in the spring, and continues through early winter.

If you are hoping to adopt a kitten to bond with, keep in mind that cat personalities are like human personalities: each is an individual.

A cat's true personality does not begin to show until about five months and can continue developing until two years of age. If you adopt a kitten, you won't know what type of cat you have (affectionate, timid, playful, etc.) until your cat is fully grown.

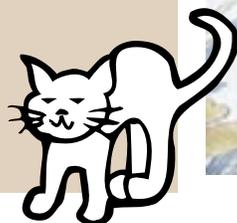
Kittens, like all babies, are adorable. They are full of energy, very entertaining, insatiably curious, and completely captivating. Simply put, they are irresistible. Remember, though, that kittens grow up fast. With good care and some luck you will be rewarded with fifteen to twenty years of unconditional love and wonderful cat companionship.

If, after weighing the options, you decide to adopt a kitten, prepare yourself and your home. Put away everything you cherish. As cats grow, so does their reach. Baby-proof your house as you would for a toddler. Plan on extra cleaning time; kittens can be messy until they develop tidy feeding and litter box habits.

Have enough money set aside for kitten exams, tests, multiple vaccines, and a spay/neuter surgery. It is always a good idea to have a vet picked out before adopting any animal; with kittens you will become a regular at your vet's clinic. And remember that growing kittens eat more than fully grown cats!

Adopting a cat or a kitten is a major decision that deserves a great deal of thought before you make the commitment. Consider yourself, your family, your lifestyle, and especially the cat or kitten when you make your decision.

--- Pam Brooks
Cat Coordinator



FEATURED CATS

ChiChi and Minnie

ChiChi and Minnie are beautiful dilute tortoiseshell sisters who are looking for a home together.

ChiChi is known around her foster home as the snuggle bug. She likes to make her rounds each evening, going from lap to lap for affection and a little nap. This girl seems never to get enough snuggling, so if you are looking for a lap cat, ChiChi is your girl.

Minnie is also quite affectionate. One of Minnie's favorite spots is on your lap watching you type away on the computer keyboard while she waits for kisses. While she sits on your lap, she will often gaze into your eyes and give you a little nudge on the chin with her nose. When she does this, it is very clear that she is saying she loves you.

ChiChi and Minnie like to spend their days lounging in a sunny window, chattering at all the birds on the feeders. But all their time is not spent just lying around; they are especially happy when they can get you to play a game with their "Da Bird" toy so that they can practice their acrobatics.

If you would like to inquire about meeting ChiChi and Minnie, please call Pam, our cat coordinator, at 503-284-8768.



ChiChi



Minnie

DOG SUCCESS STORY



Opie & Jack

Jack

One dark winter night, we got a call from a woman who had rescued a small dog running loose in a busy intersection. She was on her way out of town and was planning to drop the dog at the county shelter en route to the airport. We didn't have any available dog foster homes, but on a hunch, made a call to someone we knew who had recently lost his elderly dog to cancer. Kirk Kiggins agreed to foster this little dog temporarily while we searched for its owner and arranged care for some emergency medical issues.

At his first exam, the vet told us that Jack appeared to be a Chihuahua mixed with Italian Greyhound, or maybe whippet. In any case, he had very large ears and a couple other body parts which needed surgical attention. Kirk agreed to keep him "a little longer" while we planned his vet appointments. That time also gave Kirk a chance to evaluate Jack's personality, in case no owner was found and we were able to place him for adoption.

Kirk had recently adopted a stray orange tabby cat named Opie, who quickly made friends with Jack. Jack had a serious shedding problem, demonstrated separation anxiety, and needed some remedial work on outdoor-only potty training. But he was friendly, affectionate, and obviously used to sleeping on the bed, so we fully expected an owner to step forward any minute. In the meantime, we had a list of half a dozen potential adopters who had fallen in love with Jack at first sight.

As the weeks went by, we lost hope of finding Jack's previous owner, so we started interviewing the potential adopters. One by one they all changed their minds for one reason or another, and Kirk began to consider how traumatizing separation would be for Jack and Opie, if Jack was to be adopted. Kirk wasn't really ready to adopt, and hadn't ever wanted a small dog, especially one who needed clothing to keep from shivering.

Finally, Jack's vet work was all completed, he had learned to behave properly while alone in the house, he was totally bonded with Opie, and most important, he had worked his way right into Kirk's heart. So, you guessed it: Kirk "failed" his first foster assignment for ARCF, and now Jack is a permanent member of the family.

The Canine Corner



For so many of us, it's hard to resist a dog's wide-eyed, can't-you-see-I'm-starving, if-you-loved-me-you'd-feed-me gaze. We use treats to show our pups how much we love them. My grandmother was a classic case.

Sadie was Gram's constant companion. She was a Poodle-Lhasa Apso mix: short legs, curly hair, and round as a ball. Gram loved Sadie, and showed it in ways such as melting cheese on top of her kibble and giving her ice cream for dessert. Sadie didn't walk, she waddled. And she was devoted to Gram.

When Gram had to go to the hospital for a month, Sadie went to stay with an aunt. A strict aunt. An aunt who immediately put her on a diet. After the first week or two, Sadie became much more animated. She played with the other dogs in the yard, running and leaping and wiggling and having a blast.

When Gram returned from the hospital, Sadie was overjoyed to see her. It was clear that this wasn't because she missed her daily ice cream, but because she just missed her best friend.

Gram saw how active and energized Sadie had become, and agreed to lay off the dairy extras, although it would be hard. She still slipped now and then, but she kept Sadie at a much better weight and Sadie, believe it or not, lived to be almost 19 years old.

Remember, there are many ways to show your love for your critters, and the best way is through interaction. Walk with them, play, give belly rubs or full-pup massages. Keeping the treats healthy and infrequent will help you and your companion have a long life together.

For an amusing video about the dangers of overdoing the snacks, watch "Simon's Dog", at tinyurl.com/5pqg34.

---*Ronnie Balog-Ressler*
Dog Coordinator



Curtis (left) & Muta (right)

Curtis & Muta

Cat Coordinator Pam Brooks starts the story:

Curtis and Muta are cousins (or maybe stepbrothers?), born at the same time on opposite street corners. Someone had been feeding a couple of strays and before long there were . . . well, you know the story. Curtis was the only survivor of his litter, and all but one survived in Muta's family.

Because Curtis was so young, he was paired with Muta for companionship. They bonded instantly and went through all the kitten problems together, including ringworm. That meant many baths requiring the shampoo to set for a while and do its work. To make that easier, their foster mom wrapped them in a towel held under her chin, where they stayed warm and learned to love snuggling.

They were very special, and we knew they would need an extra special home. And we found one.

Carrie Luelling takes it from there:

Gary and I adopted Curtis and Muta as Christmas gifts to each other after the loss of our beloved dog Smokey in July and the sudden death of our Maine Coon kitty Sara in October. It was an extremely hard few months, compounded by the difficult transition from a career to my first semester of law school. Gary was often home alone in the evenings and Sara had been his constant companion.

I packed up all the dog toys and Sara's toy box and bed and put them on a shelf in the garage. However, I was not able to find a place "out of sight" for Sara's two large scratching posts—they were just too big for the garage. Thus, thoughts of Sara and the emptiness of the house were not "out of mind" when I was home studying on the weekends. I knew that I would never be able to replace Sara—but Gary and I still had a lot of love to give and could provide a good home to a pet in need.

When Curtis and Muta joined our home, they seemed to know just what WE needed. Curtis has promptly taken over Sara's cuddling role and loves his nightly grooming. He greets all our guests at the front door, including our young neighbor girl who comes over to feed him treats. Muta has assumed Smokey's old job of wanting to play and making us laugh.

We store their human-powered toys in a closet and when Muta sees me starting up the stairs, he sprints up ahead of me to sit at the closet door and meow. He will do that EVERY time we go up the stairs until we play with him; then he will play so hard he pants with his tongue hanging out! His obsession with his toys is similar to a Lab with a ball, and it's hilarious. If I am downstairs and say "Do you want to play?" Curtis and Muta promptly race upstairs to sit in front of the closet.

Curtis and Muta have impeccable manners and are very gentle, thanks to foster mom Pam. We are honored to be their parents and we look forward to many years sharing their love.

Frasier

(formerly Richard)

Handsome, gentle giant Frasier was adopted by Karynn MacKinnon. Frasier is timid and sensitive to new people and situations, so we knew he would need a very special kind of home. Karynn reports "Frasier is totally coming out of his shell. He sleeps on my bed, he comes out to meet my friends, and he's settling in very well. I just love him!"



MORE CAT SUCCESS STORIES

Lindsey & Erik

(formerly Thor & Freya)

Lindsey and Eriksen (Erik for short) are wonderful cats and have adapted well to their new home. They are siblings and it is great to see them play and snuggle together. Lindsey is a lap cat who loves to lie upside down and have her belly rubbed. Erik fetches a ball like a dog.

They add warmth and companionship to the house. They are exactly what I was hoping for. Thanks to ARCF for the great work you do.

Tom Rhodes



Above: Tom Rhodes, Lindsey & Erik

Sam

It's been 13 months since Sam came to live with me. It took him a year to begin to feel comfortable here, but now he's very curious and greets people at the door, although he won't allow them to pet him. He will never be a lap cat, but he's always near me, and usually leans on me when we are in bed. Thank you for Sam.

Donna Lusthoff



Emily

Just wanted to send you a quick note to tell you how much I love Emily. She is the sweetest kitty, so beautiful and very talkative. Sometimes I call her Miss Pretty and sometimes Miss Talks-a-Lot. She answers to about everything. Thank you for Emily.

Beverly Reams

Mika

(formerly Daisy Mae)

Mika celebrated the one year anniversary of her adoption on May 10. She is a sweet, wonderful, quirky, and fun girl who loves to eat. Her favorite foods? Green beans—and the kitchen sponge, when she can sneak it away. The only thing she loves more is her feline sister Mooshki, who snuggles up to her and washes her from head to toe. Mika likes to watch the outside activities from her windowsill perch but her days of living outdoors are definitely behind her; she runs for cover whenever the front door opens. A cozy fleece blanket on the couch with mom is so much better. She is happy and has a good life.

Lea Shapiro



Mika (left) & Mooshki (right)

OBESITY CONTINUED

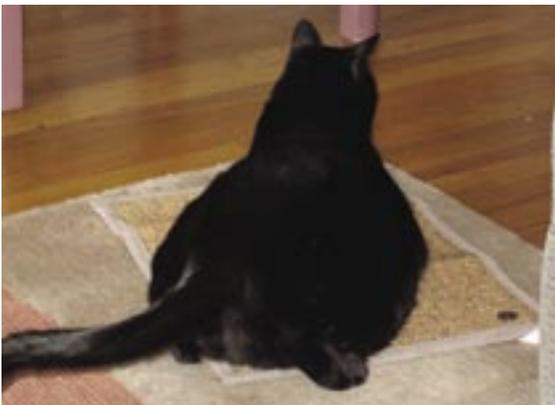
Finally, monitor progress by regularly assessing body condition (feeling for ribs, looking for a waist, etc.). A visit to your vet for weigh-ins every two to four weeks will help monitor progress. This is a gradual, lifelong process to help your pet achieve and maintain a healthy weight and improve its overall health and quality of life.

No magic cure exists for obesity, but there are a few guidelines you can follow to help your pet lead a more healthy life: Feed an appropriate amount of a well-balanced diet, limit treats, increase exercise, and continue to monitor body condition and weight. By helping your pet maintain a healthy body weight, you help your pet live a longer, more fulfilling life.

Dr. Casazza is an associate veterinarian at North Portland Veterinary Hospital.



Oliver, a portly gentleman, has recently started a reducing regimen.



This photo of "Miss Muffet" (name changed to protect her privacy) made her decide to get serious about a weight reduction program.

WHAT TO DO

Kitten Rescue

"Help, I've found some kittens in my backyard!"

We'll get plenty of calls in the coming months from concerned citizens who have found a litter of kittens outside and want to rescue them. Often the first instinct is to grab the kittens, take them inside, and start making phone calls for help.



But if you find yourself in this position, please consider that unless you are absolutely sure that the mother is dead or otherwise removed from the area, she will probably be back shortly to care for her kittens. She may be away eating, hunting, or hiding out of sight in hopes you'll leave so she can come back to her nest.

Kittens need their mother until at least six weeks of age. She feeds them exactly the right food, keeps them clean, and teaches them valuable feline life skills. If the momcat senses you are intent on moving them, she'll probably do that herself, and you may not be able to find them again. So, don't disturb the kittens, no matter how irresistible they look. Leave food in the area of the nest, but not right next to it, so predators aren't drawn to the babies by the smell of the food.

Keep an eye on the kittens from a distance. If the momcat hasn't returned and the food is still untouched in 24 hours, give us a call and we'll help you through the process of orphan kitten care. It's tiring and time-consuming to bottle feed a litter, so you don't want to take that on unless the kittens are truly orphaned.

If the momcat does come back, make sure she has plenty of high-quality food and fresh water. If she appears to be socialized, you may be able to bring her and the litter inside.

Once the kittens have been weaned (at about eight weeks old), the momcat can be spayed, and the kittens can start on the vaccines and treatments they need prior to adoption. Our foster homes are usually full, but we can help with advice and referrals for getting them adopted.

If the mother is not approachable, continue to provide food and water and contact the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon for advice on capturing and caring for her and the kittens.

Resources:

For an excellent, detailed kitten care guide: www.kittenrescue.org/pages.php?pageid=15

Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon,
503-797-2606: www.feralcats.com



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Daughter Emma with rescue cat George

Elizabeth & Jason Isbell

Two years ago, Elizabeth and Jason Isbell noticed stray cats in their North Portland neighborhood that didn't seem to be very well cared for. One cat in particular looked awfully sick. He was friendly enough to handle, so Elizabeth called ARCF for advice and help with the medical care. He was too sick to save, but it motivated Elizabeth to learn more about how to help the remaining cats.

She spoke to neighbors and found both sympathetic support and strong resistance, and even anger directed at her for trying to help the cats. She wasn't sure how to proceed, but when she found a litter of unhealthy kittens, and saw one get hit by a car, she knew it was time to take action. "I was determined that it wasn't going to happen again," said Elizabeth.

ARCF helped with vet care for the friendly cats, which were candidates for fostering and adoption. We directed Elizabeth to the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon (FCCO) for help with trap-neuter-return (TNR) of the untouchable cats. She borrowed traps and learned how to capture the cats, brought them in for spay/neuter surgeries, and released them back to the homes where they were being fed. Since then, Elizabeth and Jason have brought 26 cats to FCCO for TNR, and rescued about half a dozen cats for placement through ARCF.

Elizabeth still runs into resistance from some neighbors, but she watches carefully for changes in the feral cat population and newcomers are immediately scooped up before they can contribute to the overpopulation. "There have been no kittens born for over a year," said Elizabeth. "That's such a relief."

ARCF depends on dedicated volunteers like the Isbells, and we are grateful for all their hard work on behalf of the cats no one else cared about.

IN MEMORIAM

Patty Davies' cat Percy had a long and happy life but finally ran out of steam just three months shy of his 22nd birthday.



Daniela Morescalchi lost her dear boy, Ben Amato, to a heart attack. As with all tuxedo cats, he was extra sweet.



Lisa Alhadeff lost her darling Zack. He was a terrific cat and all-around wonderful companion.



In loving memory of Duncan, faithful companion to Alicia. You will be missed, Dunkers.



Maureen Herndon lost her precious Emma at age 22.



Mary Richardson lost Sophie (around age 18) to cancer. Sophie shared love and affection with everyone she encountered up until the day she died.



Keeli Hachiya lost her cat Cindy at age 18.



Bella and Dolce Davenport lost their feline friends, Oreo, who was always surrounded by many admirers, and Annie, who rests in a better place after a lifetime of being a great companion.



Lorraine Tobeck lost Murray, a good cat and true friend, to kidney disease. He is missed by all, including his feline brother, Simon.



Marian Kerr said goodbye to Sweet Pea, a truly sweet and shy cat, rescued by Lorraine Tobeck with help from ARCF many years ago. Sweet Pea is also survived by her feline companion, Thomas.



Animal Talk is a quarterly newsletter published by Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc.

Our Mission: To rescue, shelter, and care for homeless animals and place them in permanent, responsible homes; to promote and support spay/neuter for all companion animals.

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Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc., is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt corporation funded solely by private donations. A board of directors makes decisions on policy and activities. All funds are used exclusively for veterinary care, food, classified advertising to find suitable homes to place animals, and publishing the quarterly newsletter, *Animal Talk*. Volunteers provide good temporary homes until the animals are placed in responsible, permanent homes.

Animal Placements

For February-March-April: We placed 26 cats and 1 dog in new loving, responsible homes. Our major expenses were:

Veterinary Fees*: \$24,438.70
Advertising: \$0
Food, Special Meds**: \$416.62
Newsletter: \$922.23

*These expenses include veterinary care for the dogs of Portland's homeless. We also had expenses for injured and sick pets and emergency vet visits.

**Most volunteers pay for food and litter for the animals they care for as their contribution to the cause.

THINGS WE LIKE

The Lotus Cat Tower

If you share your house with felines, you probably have at least one large, carpet-covered object that the cats climb, perch, and sleep on. These are not usually beautiful, but you make room for them because your cats need their own furniture.

Here's our recommendation for a cat tower that actually looks like a well-designed piece of modern furniture. The Lotus Cat Tower is made by The Refined Feline, and is described as having "Zen-like design which blends symmetry, functionality, and minimalism into a beautiful, 'flowering' tower."

The tower has three carpeted levels: two flat levels suitable for climbing and perching, and a top level with a concave curve that is comfy for undisturbed observation and long naps. The base of the tower is a compartment with a cushioned, removable lid. This hide-away cubby is handy for storing extra toys and paraphernalia. One side of the base is covered by a sisal scratching pad. The sisal, all the carpet, and the cushion cover are replaceable. Four choices of finish stain are available.

One ARCF foster home has had a Lotus Tower for almost three years, and it looks new, despite constant use, by several resident and many foster cats. The Lotus Cat Tower is available from www.therefinedefeline.com (or 800-289-6136) and www.costco.com (but not from Costco stores).



James atop the Lotus tower

YES! I want to help

Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc., depends entirely on your donations. Our work includes rescue, medical aid, food and shelter, humane education, neutering/spaying, and more. All workers are volunteers. Your contribution goes directly to help the animals. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Make a secure online donation using a credit card, debit card, or PayPal account. Save time and postage!
Visit our website for more details, www.pdx-petadoption.org.

- I enclose _____ for humane work. (\$35 sponsors an animal, but we appreciate any amount)
- Sponsors can check here to receive a story and a photo about the animal being fostered.
- I'd like to contribute \$ _____ for the ARCF Microchipping Program, for adopted animals to have microchips.

I'm interested in being a volunteer. Please contact me at _____.

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