



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

FIGHT THE BEG

Proper feeding habits
can help with pet obesity

FAMILY FEATURES

When it comes to keeping pets at a healthy weight, humans can contribute to both the problem and the solution. Just as people need to control the temptation to overindulge, pet owners need to control the temptation to overindulge their pets.

A survey of pet owners by Royal Canin in 2018 revealed that more than half of cat and dog owners always or often give their pets food if they beg for it, and almost a quarter of cat and dog owners sometimes overfeed their pets to keep them happy¹.

“When sad eyes plead for one more treat or constant meowing reminds you the treats are in easy reach, it’s common for pet owners to give in to the temptation and play into that begging behavior,” said Dr. Eric Mueller, veterinarian and Royal Canin spokesperson. “Unfortunately, in the long run, those quick responses can have some damaging results for a pet’s overall health.”

Estimates suggest that as many as 59 percent of dogs and 52 percent of cats worldwide are overweight¹. Yet according to the survey, only a quarter of cat and dog owners describe their pets as overweight. The survey also revealed owners may not understand how much food cats and dogs need or what they should or should not eat.

The strong emotional bond between owners and their pets may be part of the issue. Many owners express affection for their pets through feeding, which can easily lead to the pet consuming more calories than it needs. In the survey, 59 percent of cat and dog owners said they feel rewarded when feeding their pets and 77 percent said their animals get excited about being fed.

However, many owners are not fully aware of the consequences of overfeeding their pets.

More than 60 percent of survey respondents were unaware that overweight pets may be susceptible to diabetes and orthopedic disease. Pet owners also reported a lack of awareness in the relationship between their pets’ excessive weight and reduced quality of life, increased risk of heart disease and shorter z.

Armed with the knowledge that extra treats and table scraps can have a negative impact on a pet’s health, Mueller says it’s never too late to make some changes for the better:

Talk to a veterinarian. Obesity is a medical concern. Pet owners should feel comfortable seeing their veterinarian to start a conversation about their pet’s weight. If a veterinarian identifies that there is an issue, he or she can develop a weight loss plan to help a pet reach its ideal weight and body condition, as well as discuss solutions to help control begging during the weight loss process.

Practice smart nutrition. Not surprisingly, proper nutrition is often one of the first solutions a veterinarian is likely to recommend to address a pet’s weight problem. One option your veterinarian may recommend is ROYAL CANIN VETERINARY DIET® SATIETY® SUPPORT cat and dog formulas, which provide great taste and are clinically proven to support weight loss and help reduce begging. The

formulas use the highest industry standards and quality ingredients and are designed to help keep pets feeling full and satisfied between meals.

Focus on portion control. Although many varieties of pet food include recommended serving sizes on the packaging, those servings are general guidelines and don’t take into account a pet’s unique circumstances and dietary needs. A better approach when working to bring a pet’s weight down is to measure out the recommended feeding amount directed by a veterinarian.

Encourage exercise. Encourage regular physical activity. This can be anything from brief periods of play to long walks. Remember to adjust the intensity based on the individual abilities of your pet.

Maintain consistency. Changing behaviors can be challenging. Your personal motivation and commitment are critical to the success of your pet’s weight loss program. Remember that a pet is not likely to immediately understand why the treats have ceased or why mealtime looks different. Attention-seeking behaviors may even amplify for a time. Hold firm and be consistent in resisting those begging eyes and you can find the process becomes easier for both of you.

Learn more about managing your pet’s nutritional and dietary needs at [RoyalCanin.com](#).

¹Royal Canin 2018 Online Survey of Pet Owners



Are you overfeeding your pet?

Treats should be limited to no more than 10% of the recommended total daily calorie intake. Seemingly small treats that you give to your dog at the table can in fact turn out to be the equivalent of a sizable meal. If these are not included in your calculations of your dog’s daily food ration, there is a serious risk of causing obesity. Remember to adjust the daily food intake accordingly; no more than 10% of calories should be from treats. Nutrition information is based on popular name brands.

DOGS

	Food	Quantity	Calories	Excess Caloric Intake (%) ¹	Equivalent in Doughnuts for Humans ³
	Ham	2 oz (2 Slices)	70	11%	2 DOUGHNUTS
	Bacon Strip Treats	3 oz	297	45%	4 DOUGHNUTS
	Rawhide Bone	6.7 oz	664	100%	10 DOUGHNUTS

CATS

	Food	Quantity	Calories	Excess Caloric Intake (%) ²	Equivalent in Doughnuts for Humans ³
	Feline Mixed Treats	10 Pieces	7.9	6%	1 DOUGHNUT
	Salmon	2.2 oz	70	49%	5 DOUGHNUTS
	Tuna	2 oz	80	56%	6 DOUGHNUTS

1. % of daily energy intake recommended for a 20 kg (44 lb) dog. 2. % of daily energy intake recommended for a 4 kg (8.8 lb) cat. 3. Equivalent number of 200-calorie doughnuts for a person on a 2,000-calorie diet. Treats’ caloric values derived from commonly searched internet resources. For exact caloric calculation, please consult your veterinarian.