

5 Reasons Why Pet Obesity is a Big Deal

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Some people might look at an overweight pet and say, "oh, how cute." While it's true that any pet can be cute, pet obesity is nothing to be fawned over. It's not healthy and will ultimately lower a pet's life expectancy. Here are 5 reasons why pet obesity is a big concern. If you think your pet might be overweight, talk with your veterinarian.

1. Pet obesity exacerbates arthritis

[Dr. Ernie Ward writes](#), "The number one medical condition associated with excess weight is [osteoarthritis \(OA\)](#). Both large and small [breeds of dogs](#) are typically affected, but cats are developing crippling arthritis at alarming rates. If your pet is carrying as little as one or two extra pounds, remember those pounds are stressing tiny joints not designed to carry extra weight. Making matters worse, fat cells produce harmful chemicals known as [adipocytokines](#) that damage even non-weight bearing joints. There is no cure for arthritis; we can only minimize the pain." [Learn more about arthritis and pets here >>>](#)

2. Obese pets have less fun

Dogs love to [exercise](#); it's in their nature. They weren't bred to ride the couch. It only takes a little research on the [history of breeds](#) to notice that most have hunted and worked with humans for thousands of years. "Dogs are born to work for a living," says the [ASPCA website](#). "Most are bred for a particular purpose like hunting, herding livestock, or providing protection." Knowing this, do you think a dog that has a hard time getting around would be happy? Would you? [Check out these fun exercises to do with your dog >>>](#)

3. Obesity can increase the risk of diabetes

[According to Dr. Ruth MacPete](#), "Diabetes mellitus is a

multifactorial [disease](#) influenced by both inherited and environmental factors... However, of all the risk factors, obesity is the most important, especially since the prevalence of obesity is increasing." [Learn more about diabetes here >>>](#)

4. Pet obesity is increasing

[Matt Henry writes](#) that according to recent statistics, compiled in the [2013 Banfield State of Pet Health Report](#), "Pet obesity is increasing at an alarming rate. Drawing on a sizable sample group of 2 million [dogs](#) and nearly half a million [cats](#)... 37% more dogs and 90% more cats are obese this year compared to five years ago. [Read more statistics about the pet-obesity epidemic here >>>](#)

5. Obesity can increase the risk of high blood pressure

[According to Dr. Ernie Ward](#), "Sometimes we forget our pets get many of the same [diseases](#) we do. Hypertension is one of these commonly overlooked conditions in pets. High blood pressure is known as the "silent killer" because you can't tell if your pet has it, nor can you see the damage it's causing -- until it's too late." [Learn more about heart disease in dogs and cats >>>](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.