

Companion Animal Newsletter - January 2020

CONSIDERING GETTING A CANINE COMPANION?

Here are 10 top tips to help you make the right choices. We offer a telephone appointment with our experienced veterinary nurses to discuss and go through any questions you may have.

TIME AND LIFESTYLE

Consider how much time you have each day for walking and companionship. Would your lifestyle suit having a dog or a puppy?

MALE OR FEMALE?

Although this doesn't seem like a major decision, this could have implications in the future. Including neutering costs, behaviour, pregnancies.

BREED TYPE

There are hundreds of breeds /crossbreeds of dogs out there so careful consideration of which type is right for you is key. For example, coat type, exercise needs, breed traits etc.

CONSIDERING THE LONG TERM COSTS

- Initial cost of the puppy/dog
- Food
- Toys
- Insurance
- Vet fees
- Kennelling fees
- Training/ behaviour classes

WHERE IS THE PUPPY COMING FROM?

Seeing a puppy with its mother is always the best start in life and any reputable breeder would be happy for you to visit. Bear in mind that there are puppies and dogs in rehoming centres that may be suited to you, perhaps you could give one the loving home it needs?

AGE OF PUPPY, OR OLDER DOG?

Although puppies are normally 8 weeks old before going to their new homes and this is a good age for socialising, consider whether an older dog would suit you? A puppy for sale under 8 weeks of age would be a cause for concern.

CHECK HEALTH RECORDS OF MOTHER AND PUPPY

Always check the health status of both the puppy and the breed type. For example: Have they been vet checked, have they got their compulsory microchip, are they vaccinated and any health information you may need to know, for example hip scores?

EXPERIENCE, TRAINING & SOCIALISATION

Ask about how much training the puppy/ dog has already had, and if you have the resources to continue this. Ask about different methods of training.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Are you aware of all the dos and don'ts of owning a dog? We offer advise on:

- Health care
- Exercise plans
- Dietary advise
- Common signs of illness to be aware of
- Poisons

MAKE A LIST OF QUESTIONS YOU'D LIKE TO ASK

Once you see a puppy it is hard to make an objective decision of whether it is right for you. So make a list of any queries you may have.

You can also make a list of questions to ask us, we will be happy to go through this exciting time with you over a phone call consultation.

GET FIT FOR THE NEW YEAR

Did you know that 1 in 3 pets in the UK are overweight or obese?

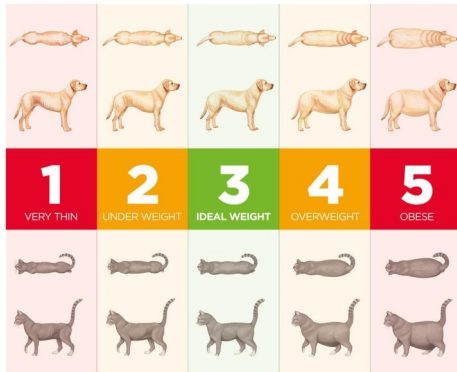
Many of us don't realise that our pet is overweight because the weight gain is easy to miss, often taking place gradually over time. Even though it's happening right in front of you, a few ounces here and there might not be immediately noticeable but weight gain can result in serious health issues. Being 20% overweight can increase the risk of your pet developing:

- Diabetes
- Osteoarthritis
- Urinary stones
- Heart disease



How does your pet shape up?

Check their Body Condition score on the chart below



The life expectancy of an overweight pet can be significantly shorter than that of a pet with a healthy body condition score. In addition to the health risks, excess weight can impact on your pet's wellbeing, happiness and overall quality of life. To the untrained eye a pet may appear fine, but ideal body condition score can vary in relation to the size and breed of your pet. Our vets and nurses will be able to advise you on your pet's ideal weight and how to achieve and maintain this and we offer free weight clinics with our veterinary nurses to help support your pet with weight loss.

Between routine check-ups, feel free to call into the surgery and use the weighing scales, our receptionists will make a note on your pet's account of the recorded weight for monitoring so that you can assess if your dog is maintaining a healthy weight. You can also identify if your pet is overweight by placing your hand over their ribcage, if the ribs are hard to feel or even impossible to feel, they are more than likely overweight.

Here are some other signs of obesity you may notice:

- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty in walking
- Slow movement
- Collar needs loosening
- Loss of an obvious waist
- Sleeping more than usual
- Bad temper
- Difficulty grooming

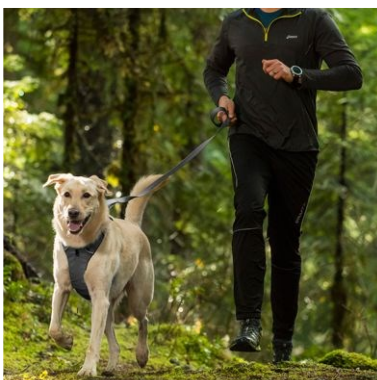


What causes weight gain?

Most cases of weight gain are caused by eating too much, be this large portions at meal times, additional treats or eating the wrong type of food (intended for humans!), combined with lack of exercise but there can be other contributing factors too.

Age

Older animals are less active, have less energy, and require fewer calories, which is why nutrition formulated for their specific age group is vital to your pet's weight and overall health.



Breed

Some breeds are more susceptible to gain weight.

Neutering

Clinical studies have shown that the basic metabolism of neutered pets is lower, and they require fewer calories.

Medical Issues

Very occasionally weight gain is associated with a medical disorder that may require specific treatment.

EXERCISING WITH YOUR DOG

As well as feeding your dog the correct nutrition, promoting regular exercise will help the process of healthy weight loss and maintenance. Here are a few workout tips for exercises you and your dog can do together.

Power dog walks with intervals

Taking your dog for a walk and incorporating jogging, running or high stepping not only increases their heart rate and calorie burn but yours too!

Dog squat tease

Stand with your legs spread shoulder width in preparation to do a leg squat. As you descend, tap your dog with his favourite toy. As you rise, lift the toy above your head to encourage your dog to jump after it. This can be done in your home and outside as well.

Dog tag

Just like we did at school, play tag with your dog at your local park, in the garden or even inside your house. You'll both get a great cardio workout as your dog tries to chase you down.



EXERCISING WITH YOUR CAT

Playing with toys

Giving your cat some homemade or pet shop toys can encourage her to get moving.

Catch the light

Shine a white light torch on the walls and let your cat play. Be careful not to use a red light laser, though – it can damage your cat's eyes.

Power walking

Try taking your cat out for a walk on a harness. Cat harnesses are available from the surgery on order with next day delivery. While you're out, encourage your cat to jump and play using natural 'toys' like piles of leaves.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PET FOOD FOR YOUR PET'S WEIGHT LOSS

The food your pet eats affects their overall health and well-being. Balanced nutrition is an essential part of an active, healthy lifestyle.

- Eating too much at meal times, snacks or our food can increase weight gain.
- Correct nutrition plays a very important role in treating an overweight pet.
- Ask one of our vets or nurses about our range of weight management foods to help your pet lose weight and maintain a healthy and active life.

ANSWERS TO THE CHRISTMAS QUIZ—*Did you spot the deliberate mistakes?!*

Barr Load ----- (Labrador)

Rile Door Bell ----- (Border Collie)

Ear Snip Pringles -- (Springer Spaniel)

Longer Beer ----- (Leonberger)

Eel Bag ----- (Beagle)

Red Hemp Hangers -- (German Shepherd)

Tandoor Paddles ----- (Standard Poodle)

Mad at Lion ----- (Dalmation)

Dads Hunch ----- (Dachshund)

Call us Jerks ----- (Jack Russell)

Rover Green Tiled ----- (Golden Retriever)

Bison R Chief --- (Bichon Frise)

Eat Danger ----- (Great Dane)

Rib Zoo ----- (Borzo)

DOG ATTACKS AND WHAT TO DO



How common are dog fight injuries?

We have seen an increase in cases involving dog on dog violence, these can range from small punctures in the skin to deep flesh wounds.

If your dog is aggressive towards other dogs it is your responsibility to ensure they do not cause any harm, it is therefore imperative to discuss aggressive behaviour with a vet to determine the possible cause and relevant treatment which may address the issue.

What to do if another dog attacks your dog?

If your dog is bitten by or attacked by another dog in the UK, here's what to do:

- Keep the dog calm and warm in a blanket and keep the nose and mouth exposed.
- Try not to handle them more than necessary, as they may be in great pain even if this is not obvious on the outside.
- If your dog is small, place them in a wash basket or box lined with a blanket or towel.
- If your dog is large, then place them on a large blanket for easy lifting.
- If your dog has a bleeding wound, flush it with warm salt water and then apply a clean cloth or dressing and apply firm pressure during transport.
- If your dog's chest is punctured, cover the wound with a clean, damp cloth or cling film and bandage the chest tightly enough to seal it.
- If your dog's abdomen is punctured and internal organs are protruding, don't let the dog lick at them. Rinse the exposed organs immediately in clean water if you can. Use a warm, damp sheet to wrap your dog's abdomen and contact us immediately.

If you need to break up a dog fight try dousing the animals with water or a fire extinguisher if available – **do not attempt to break the fight up yourself** as you can easily get bitten.

My dog attacked another dog unprovoked, could I be in trouble?

Reasons for dogs showing aggression:

- Dominance
- Fear
- Defence of their territory
- Pain
- Frustration
- Overly enthusiastic play



If a dog is deemed to be "dangerously out of control" then the owner could face a fine of up to £5000, a jail sentence of up to six months, and a ban on future dog ownership. The dog may also be put to sleep and the owner may be ordered to pay the veterinary bills of the other dog.

If a dog is allowed to injure a guide dog, the owner can be sentenced to up to three years in jail and fined. Civil proceedings can also be taken against the owner of a dog that is dangerous and not kept under proper control.

Can aggressive dogs be rehabilitated?



There are a number of factors that determine whether a dog's aggressive tendencies can be curbed. One of the biggest is age, with dogs under two standing a far better chance of rehabilitation. Dogs who are older are more difficult to retrain because their behaviours are much more entrenched. The key is to socialise dogs as early as possible.

According to animal behaviourists, it's far harder to stop dogs being aggressive to other animals than it is to people. This is because people control resources dogs want like food which they can use to their advantage.

Any animal bite should not be ignored. There are thousands upon thousands of nasty bacteria which live in the mouth of dogs and cats therefore increasing the risk of infection. If your pet has a bite wound please arrange an appointment to see a vet as soon as possible.



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Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

