



Losing Holiday Pounds

Most of us are familiar with the holiday tendency to add a few extra pounds. But where people have the option to go to the gym, pets do not. The Food and Drug Administration just approved Slentrol, the first diet pill for plump pedigrees and mutts alike. About 40 percent of dogs in the United States are overweight, according to Pfizer, and many owners find it hard to help their pets lose weight. Consider these other steps you can take to help your pet lose those extra holiday pounds.

Feed your pet a balanced pet food diet

Do not give your dog or cat table treats. He might not like it at first, but this is the only way to maintain a healthy weight. This is tough love, and your pet will benefit from a nutritionally balanced diet.

Step up the exercise

Longer walks or play times will be good exercise for both of you. If you live in a cold climate, there might be an indoor facility that will let you walk your dog.

Try changing to a premium dietary low fat/high fiber pet food

When switching, it's important to change the food gradually. Provide your pet's daily food portion as 75% of the old food and 25% of the new formula on the first day. For day two, try a 50-50 ratio. Then, proceed to a 25-75 split. On day four, go to 100 percent of the new low-fat food.

Instead of treats for praise, try play.

Treats add up fast, so when your pet is good, play or pull out a new toy instead of rewarding with food.

Set a deadline for your pet reaching a certain target weight

That will keep you motivated and focused, and might help you lose some of your holiday weight, too!

Before you make any dietary changes, discuss your plans with your veterinarian. VPI Pet Insurance offers optional Vaccination and Routine Care Coverage that includes a comprehensive physical exam. Whether you're watching carbs or calories, the best thing is to be able to help your pet stay healthy as he ages.

