

How to Control Feline Obesity

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



As the number one nutritional problem in cats, obesity is unhealthy for cats and can lead to serious medical problems such as diabetes mellitus, lameness, and

even premature death. Prevention is the best way to avoid medical problems due to obesity. Making small changes in your cat's lifestyle can be the difference between a fit cat and a fat cat.

Rule out medical conditions

Although most weight gain in cats is simply due to feeding too much or exercising too little, there may be treatable medical conditions contributing to obesity. If your cat has an unexplained increase in appetite or weight, have her examined by your veterinarian to rule out possible medical conditions.

Also, always have your cat checked by your veterinarian before starting any weight loss program.

Feed the right food, in the right amounts

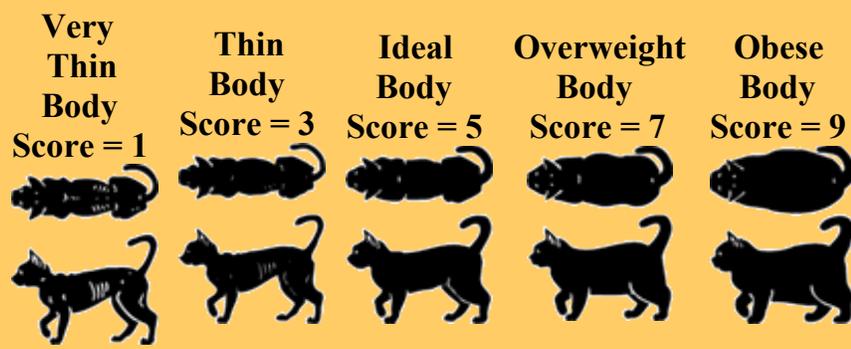
Feeding a nutrient-packed, healthy food ensures your cat gets the most out of what she eats. Use label recommendations as a portion guideline and avoid overfeeding. Be willing to adjust according to your cat's body condition. Providing food as small meals rather than free-choice feeding lets you monitor food intake.

Get exercise

Exercise burns fat and calories and helps to maintain muscle and joint health. Try to play with your cat for at least 20 minutes, twice daily. An exciting, interactive game of chasing a feathered toy increases bonding between you and your feline friend and helps keep her healthy.

WHAT IS YOUR CAT'S BODY SCORE?

Veterinarians often use a 9-point scoring system to evaluate the body condition of pets. A point value of 1 means the cat is extremely thin to the point of emaciation. A score of 9 means the pet is grossly overweight. A score of 5 is 'just right.' To determine body score, your veterinarian considers the following areas of a cat: the ribs, the base of the tail, and the spine/shoulders/hips. The cat is looked at from above and from a side profile.



Offer low-fat, low-calorie treats

The extra calories and low nutritional value of treats and table scraps are often the biggest offenders when it comes to obesity. Instead of offering table scraps as a treat, offer one of the many low-fat, low-calorie treats now available. Even better, offer your cat affection in place of treats.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



[Da Bird](#) is a tempting toy that exercises your cat as he hunts and chases it.



[Drs. Foster & Smith Tuna Flakes](#) provide a low-fat, high-protein snack option for overweight cats.