



Mountainview Animal Hospital

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER



The Bottom Line

Looking for a low calorie treat to give your pets? Each Canine Medi-Treat has only 14 calories and the feline version only 1 calorie.

Obesity is medically defined as a 15% or greater increase in optimal weight.

40% of dogs and cats are overweight.



Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes and pancreatic disease.

Play is a great way to bond with your pet, burn calories and have fun.

Although my big German shepherd Bear does not need to loose weight, he is not off the hook, his New Years resolution is to finally start listening to his mom.

WHAT'S YOUR PET'S NEW YEARS RESOLUTION?

Every December, dinner conversations inevitably come around to questions concerning peoples New Years resolutions. Most of us tease each other about the ambitious changes we plan to make to become better, healthier, kinder and of course thinner people. I can't count the number of times I promised (and failed) to loose those extra 15 lbs. Despite my grandiose determination on New Years Eve that this will be the year that I will become thinner, fitter and smarter, January 2nd is always a day fraught with the guilt and self loathing of failure. This year it occurred to me that I should not suffer this cycle alone. My pets will now become the victim of the dreaded "New Years Resolution". Nike will become my first pet to join me in this torturous tradition; Nike is going back on a diet.

Why am I so strict with Nike's weight? Well simply put, because I love her. Although Nike is far from obese, if her bit of weight gain this year is ignored, it will be more next year and the year after, then suddenly she is obese. Just as in people, obesity is a serious problem in our pets and it is the leading cause of nutritional disorders. Obesity increases heart and circulatory disease by up to 75%, reproductive disorders by 65%, musculoskeletal disease by 54%, cancer by 50% and skin conditions by up to 40%. These are very alarming statistics. The bottom line, obesity will shorten our pets' lives. Even more distressing, the quality of their lives will decrease too. How can they be happy if their joints hurt or they are constantly out of breath when they try to play, if they even try to play?

Surprisingly, most people are not even aware that their pet is overweight. A simple way to snap ourselves back into reality is to measure our pets' body condition score (BCS). This is a scoring system that rates a pet's body fat on a scale of 1 to 5. Look at your pet's physique from above, paying close attention to the pelvic bones, the waistline and the rib cage. BE HONEST. A pet with a BCS of 1 or 2 is too thin, the ribs and pelvic bones will be easily seen and felt. With an ideal BCS of 3, your pet should have an obvious waistline, the ribs should be easily felt under the skin

but not seen and the pelvic bones should be well muscled. A pet with a BCS of 4 is too chubby, the ribs will be harder to feel and the waistline lost. A pet with a BCS of 5 is obese, the ribs cannot be felt and the waistline is bulging. If your pet scored a 4 or 5, he or she needs to join Nike in her New Years resolution to loose weight.

Why are so many of our pets overweight? For most of our pets, there is no excuse, we are simply feeding them too much food and exercising them too little. For some dogs, obesity runs in the family. Certain breeds, such as the Cocker Spaniel, Beagle, Labrador and Golden Retrievers, Rottweiler, and Dachshund, are genetically prone to developing weight problems. This does not let us off the hook though, instead, this should prompt us to be even more vigilant with these particular breeds. Occasionally there really is an excuse for our pets' sudden change in weight; some pets may be suffering from a hormonal condition. Simple blood tests and medication can be used to diagnose and treat this disease.

So if your pet scored 4 or 5, congratulations, you have just admitted that there is a problem. This is the first step toward solving it. The next is accepting responsibility and doing something about it. We would like to help you. In January we are launching our SlimFit program (kind of like Weight Watchers for pets). During your first visit we will weigh your pet, measure his or her body condition score, choose a goal weight and select a diet and feeding quantity to help your pet achieve that goal weight. We will even include a few treats in the plan for you. Every month your pet will return to be weighed, reassessed and have his or her diet adjusted. Once your pet has reached his or her weight goal, we will help you develop a maintenance program to keep that sexy new figure. Every pet that reaches their goal weight will also have their picture in our 'New Years Resolution Book of Biggest Losers' (weight that is).

Want to join? Call our office to set up an appointment with Sabrina, our nurse, and let's take that first step to weight loss success.

The Bottom Line

Too rapid weight loss can be just as dangerous as obesity to your pet. Veterinary supervised weight loss programs can make this a safe and easy transition for both you and your pet.

Healthy Treat Options

Medi-treats Canine	14
Medi-treats Feline	1
Mini Carrot	5
Rice Cake	34
Apple Slice (¼ slice)	20
Dry Toast (¼ slice)	15
Cucumber (1" slice)	2

To make a low calorie treat, bake slices of the canned weight control diet in the oven or freeze small rolled up portions to make treat-cicles.

Some pets are terrible nappers for food. Feed these pets less in the morning before you go to work and more in the evening when you're home. This way you do not have to listen to the complaining.



CALORIE COUNTS FOR COMMON PET TREATS

5 French Fries	100	Milk Bone (medium)	40
Hot Dog	170	Hills Jerky Treats	45
Chicken (1 oz)	50	lams (large)	137
Tim Bit	80	Greenies (medium)	90
Beef (1 oz)	50	Pounce Treats	30.6
Peanut Butter (1 tbsp)	80	Rollover	258/100g
Cheese, 1 oz	110	Marrow Treats	39

HELPFUL HINTS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

- ♥ Begin by weighing your pet. This will not only help you keep track of their progress but it will allow us to individualize the diet for their caloric needs.
- ♥ A diet change will likely be required but changing to a new food suddenly can cause diarrhea. When changing to a new diet, gradually introduce the new food by mixing it with the previous food over a 5 to 7 day period.
- ♥ Treats should never make up more than 10% of your pet's daily caloric intake and should be factored in when assessing your pet's daily needs. Try to select low calorie rewards, such as Medi-Treats, ice cubes, or baby carrots.
- ♥ Measure feeding portions accurately. Use a measuring cup.
- ♥ Feeding leftover foods, kitchen scraps or additional supplements with a complete dog food can cause a nutrient imbalance and lead to obesity.
- ♥ Increasing your pet's exercise by even 10 minutes per day will make a significant difference in his or her overall health.
- ♥ Be careful not to feed your pet a large meal just before or after exercise, this may cause gastrointestinal upset.
- ♥ Your pet should have access to fresh water at all times.
- ♥ It is best to divide your pet's daily caloric requirements into 2 to 3 equal portions throughout the day. Smaller more frequent feedings will leave him or her feeling more satisfied.



EQUIVALENT WEIGHT GAIN FOR A 150 LB PERSON

		5%	10%	15%
	150 lb person	7 ½ lb	15 lb	22 ½ lb
	10 lb cat	½ lb	1 lb	1 ½ lb
	15 lb cat	¾ lb	1 ½ lb	2 ¼ lb
	20 lb cat	1 lb	2 lb	3 lb
	25 lb dog	1 ¼ lb	2 ½ lb	3 ¾ lb
	50 lb dog	2 ½ lb	5 lb	7 ½ lb
	75 lb dog	3 ¾ lb	7 ½ lb	11 ¼ lb
	100 lb dog	5 lb	10 lb	15 lb

For instance, if your cat gains just 1 pound of weight in 1 year, that is the equivalent of you or I gaining 15 pounds. That's a lot of weight for a cat to gain.

The Bottom Line

Sadly, thousands of pets are lost or stolen every year and more than 70% of those never come home.

33 % of pets will get lost at least once in their lifetime.

A tiny microchip may be the difference between lost and found.

To encourage microchipping, the town of Halton Hills has established a lifetime license for those pets that are microchipped.



Did you know that nearly 10 % of a cat's bones are in its tail? The cat body contains 245 bones, but as they grow older some of them fuse and the number becomes smaller.

SCAN THIS ABOUT MICROCHIPPING

Your pet is a cherished member of your family and his or her welfare is important to you. Sadly, thousands of pets are lost or stolen every year and more than 70% of those never come home. Even the most cautious owner may have the unfortunate reality of losing a pet. This is why it is crucial that your pet be well identified at all times.

Collars and tags with your name and address or telephone number are the first thing people look for on a stray dog or cat. Make sure the tags are clear and legible. If you work or travel to the cottage frequently, you may also wish to include those numbers on the tag. Particularly for cats, collars can be a choking hazard if they get caught on a branch; many collars now are designed to break away should this occur. Although this is a tremendous safety feature, it may leave your pet without identification.

Many purebred dogs are tattooed by the breeder shortly after birth for the purpose of identification for breed registration. There are a number of kennel associations with which the tattoo may be registered, making it difficult to quickly identify your lost pet. These tattoos are commonly found inside the ear or the thigh. Unfortunately, tattoos tend to fade

or become distorted with time and are difficult, if not impossible to read.

Microchipping is the newest means of pet identification. A tiny computer chip with a programmed identification number is imbedded in a biologically inert material and individually sterilized and packaged. The device is the size of a grain of rice and is injected by a veterinarian into your pet, under the loose skin over shoulder blades. The procedure is simple and no more painful than a vaccination. The microchips do not cause any adverse tissue reaction and remain inert until a special scanner is passed over the chip to read the identification number. The chip identification numbers are filed with a national registry that is accessible 24 hours per day and 365 days a year. All humane societies, animal shelters and veterinary hospitals are equipped with scanners. Through this system lost pets can be quickly reunited with their families. Microchipping is the only way to provide a permanent, non-alterable or easily removable means of identification that cannot be lost or fade with time. Most people whose pets have been microchipped will agree that it gives them peace of mind.

Consider this permanent and reliable identification system for your pet.

LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

Those of you who have been with us for a while will remember me writing about our clinic cat Nike's adoration for food. As Rene Zelwiger's character completed Tom Cruise in the movie Jerry MaGuire, food completes Nike. Three times daily she performs her dramatic rendition of 'The Feline Starving' song and dance beginning at least 30 minutes before her scheduled feeding time. And God forbid we are too busy to feed her promptly; she throws herself down, roles on the ground and screams at us in what could only be described as feline profanities. Desperate to end the drama I ran out and bought an automatic cat feeder. Thinking this was a stroke of genius I promptly set it up to feed Nike at 7:30 am, 12:00 noon and 4:30 pm. At 12 o'clock we all gathered near her food bowl to witness, what we thought would be a delightful surprise for the famished feline. Imagine our disappointment when the dial turned to reveal her meal and Nike ran full speed in the opposite direction. Remember, Nike never runs, but she sure did that day. It took us a full week of chasing her, carrying her screaming and physically holding her down in front of her bowl to train her that the sound of the dial turning was a good thing. Next time I get a stroke of genius, I think I will keep it to myself.



The Bottom Line

The tradition of the Christmas Stocking started in Holland during the 16th century. Kids would leave clogs filled with hay near the fireplace for Santa's reindeer. Santa would then leave behind treats for the children.

The Celts used to believe that mistletoe was a powerful charm against lightning, thunder and other scary things. The Norse thought the plant was a symbol of peace. Warriors who met under the green leaves would not fight and warring couples would "kiss and make up". Other European cultures believed that mistletoe aided in fertility and was an aphrodisiac - which explains why people become so smitten underneath it!

Although Christmas is celebrated worldwide, in many different languages, other cultures and religious beliefs also consider December to be a special month. Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah and the Festival of Lights, and the African people celebrate Kwanzaa.

December is also the month of the winter solstice. This is when the sun is farthest from the equator. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, December 21/22 is the shortest day of the year. The sun will not rise at the North Pole on this day.

BEWARE OF HOLIDAY HAZARDS TO YOUR PETS

Holiday plants can be a hazard. Holly and mistletoe are extremely poisonous when eaten. The poinsettia although not toxic can certainly cause gastric distress. It is best to keep these plants out of reach.



Electrical cords are a favorite chew toy for playful puppies and cats but cause quite a shock when bitten. Keep them out of reach or cover them with flexible plastic tubing.

Christmas ornaments are lovely to look at but often not safe to play with. Special caution is required with sharp or breakable ornaments and string objects like tinsel.

Candles should never be left unattended; curious pets may burn themselves or even start a fire by knocking the candle over.



Christmas trees should be well secured to the wall so climbing cats and jumping dogs can't knock them down. Preservatives added to the water in a tree stand can be toxic, including the home made kind like aspirin and sugar. Some pine needles can

be quite sharp and puncture your pets' intestines if ingested.

Chocolate is a favorite treat at this time of the year but it is very toxic to our furry friends, so keep them well out of reach.



Antifreeze and windshield washer fluid are extremely poisonous, as little as a teaspoon will kill a cat. Keep the bottles well sealed and out of reach and use a funnel when pouring it into the car to avoid spillage. Also keep in mind that freezing felines may climb up under the car engine to keep warm, so it is a good idea to knock on the hood of the car before starting the engine.



Bones and fat can cause severe gastrointestinal upset. The small bones from turkey or chicken can become lodged in your pet's throat, stomach or intestines. Greasy poultry skin, gravies and sauces may cause vomiting and diarrhea. Watch the hot cooking oil too; it can cause nasty burns when accidentally spilt on pets that are underfoot in the kitchen.



HOLIDAY HOURS



Dec. 24 th - Christmas Eve:	Closed
Dec. 25 th - Christmas Day:	Closed
Dec. 26 th - Boxing Day:	Closed
Dec. 31 st - New Years Eve:	Closed
Jan 1 st - New Years Day:	Closed

Unless otherwise specified here, Mountainview Animal Hospital will be open during its regular office hours. Animals in the hospital over the holidays will receive the same great care and attention as always. For those patients requiring emergency care over Christmas and New Years, The Emergency Veterinary Clinic on Hwy 10 will be open to serve your pet's medical and surgical needs. You can call ahead at 905-495-9907 or go directly there. The Emergency Veterinary Clinic is located on the south east corner of highway 10 and Wexford Rd, just one block north of Bovaird (Highway 7).

From all of us at Mountainview Animal Hospital,
we wish all of you

**A Very Merry Christmas, A Joyous
Holiday Season and A Happy New Year!**