

## Overweight Greyhound

**Reduce your dog's calories a little and add a little exercise for weight loss.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

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Q. I have an Italian Greyhound who is quite overweight. In fact, we call him Snausage. He is 6 years old. I feed him about a half cup to three-fourths cup a day of dry food. He's always hungry and wants more food. I've had him tested twice for thyroid problems, but there are no thyroid issues. I have fed him a variety of foods, both regular dry and weight control dry. Nothing seems to work to get his weight down. He's also a very picky eater and gets bored with the food I give him. I want to get his weight down. I know it's not healthy for him to be so heavy. He gets moderate exercise.

A. So you have an Italian Greyhound named Snausage. It is unusual to hear of one of these dogs being overweight. You and your veterinarian have done the right thing by having his thyroid levels checked. Make sure you are getting a comprehensive thyroid panel done, because sometimes the single test can be misleading. An underactive thyroid gland is fairly common in middle-age to older dogs and will slow down their metabolism. They will tend to be less active and put on weight. There are usually some hair coat changes as well and occasionally more serious signs. The treatment for an underactive thyroid, or hypothyroidism, is a thyroid supplement medication and periodic retesting of thyroid levels. Obesity is a problem in dogs, just as it is in people, and I am guessing that a lot of us are getting tired of hearing about it. Having said that, obesity in dogs can lead to diabetes, arthritis and possibly pancreatitis. Carol, I think you have actually answered your own question when you said your dog is a picky eater. Find a high fiber food, like Hills R/D (must be bought through a veterinarian), that Snausage does not care much for and let him sit there and stare at the bowl. Don't give in! Dogs don't really get bored with their food, but they are smart enough to act like it so they can get treats or a tastier diet. After a while, he should start dropping some pounds. Perhaps you could take him out for more walks or let him run around a dog park or unused baseball field. Just like with people, reduce calories a little and exercise a little more, and the weight will start coming off.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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