

Doggie Diets

Obesity in dogs is just as big of a problem as it is in people.

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Q. I have a Beagle/Jack Russell Terrier mix who is overweight. Is there anything I can do to help her lose weight? I've heard that feeding vegetables will help. Are fresh veggies good for dogs?

A. Obesity in dogs is just as big of a problem as it is in people. It can lead to multiple health problems, including arthritis and diabetes.

Spayed female dogs are more prone to put on extra weight due to inactivity and hormonal changes.

Feeding veggies is great way to help your dog to lose weight, although some dogs are not interested. You can use the veggies as a supplement to your dog's regular diet, so that she is not so hungry. Try offering some carrots or snap peas. Certain vegetables, such as cauliflower and broccoli, may lead to excess gas production, a condition most dog owners want to avoid.

Ultimately, feeding a high-fiber, calorie-restricted food in measured portions is the best way to take pounds off of your plump pup. These types of diets are available by prescription from your veterinarian. Ask your vet how much of the food to give your dog. Most store-bought foods that are labeled as "weight-control" or "lite" or "high-fiber" are helpful for preventing dogs from putting on more weight, but may not lead to weight loss in a dog that is already overweight. You should weigh your dog once a month (on the same scale) to monitor weight loss. For a small dog, you might expect her to lose one pound a month.

I encourage you to take regular walks with your dog, regardless of how short or infrequently. This is a great opportunity for you to both get some exercise and bonding time together.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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