

Good Food for Great Boxers

Proper nutrition enhances your Boxer's sleek good looks and vibrant personality.

Fran Hodgkins

What causes obesity? Simply put, the dog is consuming more calories than it uses up during the course of the day; its body stores those extra calories in the form of fat. One solution to your Boxers extra baggage is to put it on a doggy diet. However, do not attempt this by yourself; always consult your veterinarian when making any changes to your dogs diet. He or she may recommend switching your bulging Boxer to a lower-calorie dog food, for example, from an adult maintenance formula to a senior formula. Some animals might need a prescription diet, but that should be discussed with your vet.

Your vet may also suggest keeping your dog on the same kind of food but feeding smaller amounts. Margaret Muns, D.V.M., staff veterinarian of the Best Friends Bulletin Board, says, Owners like to see pets eat well and gobble up their food. To ensure that, the fat and calorie content is raised. So to counteract that and avoid obesity, I've found in my experience its best to back off a bit. She suggests feeding about three-quarters of the amount suggested on the package.

You might also stop the practice of free-feeding (leaving dry food out continuously so the dog can eat whenever it pleases). Another good tactic may be switching to a food that's just as nutritious but doesn't taste as good. In some cases, the vet may recommend fasting the dog, but that's an extreme measure for weight control. However, weight loss is twofold. In addition to changing your dogs food (which takes care of the problem of too many calories going in), you can increase its exercise time, which increases the number of calories it burns. Play catch, go for walks or run on the beach or in the park. Your dog will be happier and healthier for it and so will you.

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