

VetSpec[®] for dogs

Weight Management

Recent surveys on obesity in dogs have shown that between one third and a half of all dogs visiting veterinary practices are overweight. Even more worryingly, 92% of pet owners did not see obesity as a life-threatening risk. One report has suggested that overweight dogs could live up to two years less than dogs that are maintained within their ideal weight range.

As well as a loss of 'general quality of life', obese dogs suffer from similar problems to overweight humans including diabetes, arthritis and heart disease. Managing these health issues is a significant extra cost to the dog owner, particularly as their dogs get older. It is therefore imperative to understand why an increasing number of dogs are overweight and what veterinary surgeons and owners can do to significantly reduce the problem.



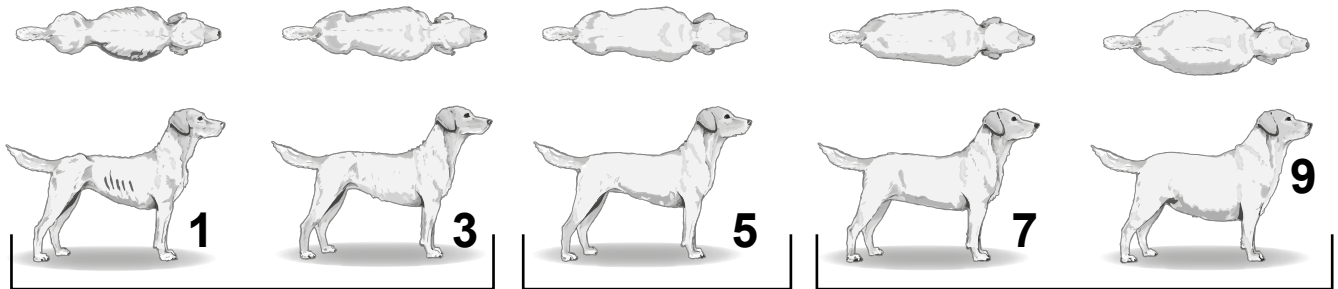
In simple terms, just like humans, overweight dogs are consuming too many calories each day compared with their exercise levels to burn calories off. However, the situation is much more complex for dog owners and simply feeding less of their current dog food and exercising the dog more may not be a realistic solution. **For example, significantly reducing the amount fed of a 'normal' dog food may compromise the essential vitamin and mineral content of the daily feed intake.** This can lead to poor skin and coat condition, impaired normal physiological functions e.g. poor gut health, and also psychological problems with increased hunger levels.



The first challenge for a dog owner is to recognise if their dog is overweight. This can be more difficult than it seems because the simple weight of the dog may not be a good indicator as even for pedigree breeds the recognised weight range may be very large. For example, the Kennel Club's breed standard for Bullmastiff males is 50-59 kg and with a height range of 64-69cm. However, knowing the actual weight of your dog is very useful for monitoring future weight loss. **Most veterinary practices have a set of scales to weigh your dog and a lot of practices run weight loss clinics where you can weigh your dog on a regular basis and monitor its progress to a target weight.** Some pet shops also have weigh scales that you can use. Failing that you can weigh yourself on the bathroom scales, then pick up your dog and weigh yourselves together. The difference in weight is the weight of the dog.

How To Body Condition Score Your Dog

The best way to determine if your dog is overweight is to use the body condition scoring system recommended by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA). Along with weighing your dog, this is the method used by most veterinary practices to determine if your dog is overweight taking into account the breed characteristics, height and overall proportion of your dog. The pictures below will show you how your dog should look AND feel to your fingers.



Under Ideal

1. Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
2. Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
3. Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

Ideal

4. Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
5. Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

Over Ideal

6. Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
7. Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
8. Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
9. Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

If your dog scores 6 or 7 then you should consider how you might change your dog's food and exercise regime to bring his weight back to a sensible level. **If the score is eight or nine or you are at all concerned about the health and well-being of your dog then definitely make an appointment with your practice to have him checked over.** You can then discuss with your vet the best actions to take to safely lose weight over a period of time.

All dog foods should have a feeding table on the packaging to give you an idea of how much food to give your dog taking into account the size and exercise level your dog gets. This level of food should provide all the nutrition that your dog needs in a carefully balanced diet. However, this is where things start to go wrong! Most owners cannot resist giving their dog treats- which are often very high in calories, scraps from the table -often with fatty bits we as humans do not like, and biscuits – very high in starch and sugar, as rewards for doing something well. Or just for looking mournful!

Treats, scraps and biscuits add significantly to your dog's calorie intake and must be controlled. Unfortunately, the obvious solution of reducing the main dog food in the diet to reduce the calories does not work because you are completely unbalancing the diet. **The best solution is to reduce your dog's normal feed by say twenty kibbles a day and use these as the treat/reward thus keeping the diet balanced for vitamins, minerals etc.**

Over the last two years the veterinary surgeons and nutrition team at VetSpec have been working with internationally recognised canine nutrition consultants to develop a totally new approach to feeding dogs that are, or tend to become, overweight. The result of all this research and development are two new products specifically formulated to address all of the issues that make feeding this type of dog such a challenge.

These new VetSpec Super Premium Dog Foods are available through veterinary practices and leading retail outlets. They are registered under the name "SuperLite" indicating the fact they contain 20% less calories than 'normal quality dog food'. There is a special formula for Senior dogs and one for all other dogs.

VetSpec SuperLite Low-Calorie Formula

A Super Premium Complete Dog Food containing 20% less calories than 'normal quality dog food'. It contains an outstanding veterinary specification supplement that ensures dogs receive the optimum vitamin and mineral balance which is so important when they are under a weight management programme. As outlined above simply reducing the quantity of 'normal quality dog food' to lose weight risks giving the dog an unbalanced/deficient diet creating other potential health issues.



The vitamin/mineral balance of the supplements included in the SuperLite Formula are enhanced by the inclusion of organic mineral complexes and the special building blocks of proteins which are often deficient in dog foods.

VetSpec SuperLite Low-Calorie Formula also addresses the complex issues of maintaining a high-quality protein intake, especially important in a weight management programme. It contains 50% locally sourced chicken as a single source of protein. This high-quality protein ensures that as the dog loses weight slowly, the muscles and organs in the body maintain their integrity. A single source of protein is also important for gut health as constantly changing meat sources can lead to loose stools. SuperLite Formula contains special prebiotic fibres and herbal sources to maintain gut health in dogs with a sensitive stomach.

The formula is cereal-grain-free, wheat gluten free, non-GM and contains no colours, preservatives or artificial flavours. This minimises the risk of potential allergies and gives owners the security of full traceability of all ingredients.

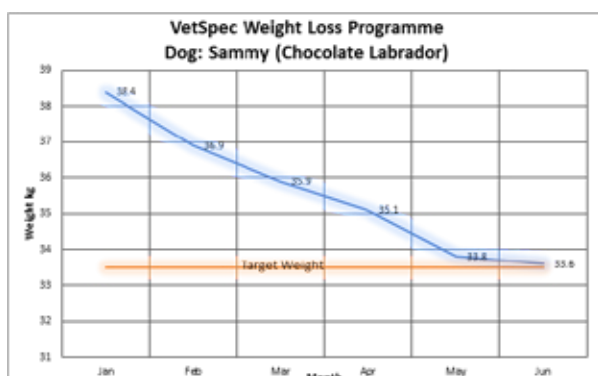
When VetSpec SuperLite Low-Calorie Formula is fed at the recommended levels the dog will slowly lose weight at between 1% and 1.5% per week. So for a typical 25kg dog this relates to 250-375g per week although the rate of weight loss will slow as the dog reaches the target weight. SuperLite Formula achieves this by restricting the calorie intake to 75% of the Metabolizable Energy (ME) required by a dog at rest. Importantly the **volume** of SuperLite food needed to achieve this is the **same** as **VetSpec Healthy Dog Formula** which has 20% more calories. The reduction in energy density achieved by innovative formulation and manufacturing techniques ensures that the dog does not feel as hungry as with traditional weight loss products.

As an adult dog ages, lean body mass declines, resulting in a decreased Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) and total energy requirement. The total daily energy needs of an average-sized 7-year-old dog may decrease by as much as 20% when compared with its needs as a young adult. As the dog ages, if the food intake does not decrease proportionately with decreasing energy needs, weight gain results. Added to this, older dogs tend to be less exercise tolerant and therefore burn less calories during work. They also tend to develop issues with joint mobility particularly if they become overweight.

VetSpec SuperLite Senior

VetSpec SuperLite Senior has been developed to take care of all these challenges faced by older dogs. It consists of **VetSpec SuperLite Formula** but with the addition of **VetSpec Omega-3 Joint Mobility Supplement** so it is rich in DHA and EPA (Omega 3s), glucosamine and chondroitin to optimise joint mobility. There is therefore no need to buy additional and expensive joint supplements for the elderly dog.

Clinical trials at Bishopton Veterinary Group in North Yorkshire have confirmed the effectiveness of the **VetSpec SuperLite products**.



Bishopton Veterinary Group
Clinical Trials

A recently published study by Thes et al (2016) determined the ME intake of 586 pet dogs. Interestingly the study found that pet dogs have a lower ME requirement than that of kennel dogs and the high incidence of dog obesity that we are seeing amongst the current pet dog population is an indication that the mean ME intake requirement on 'normal quality dog food' packaging may be too high for this type of dog. The new range of **VetSpec Super Premium** dog foods takes into account all of this latest international research to ensure that dogs are fed correctly.



VetSpec **Puppy & Junior** Formula

VetSpec Puppy and Junior Formula contains highly specific supplements to ensure optimum growth and development of your young dog through to twelve months when it can be successfully transferred to VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula (See below). VetSpec Puppy and Junior Formula is a Veterinary Specification, CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE, Super Premium dry dog food including 60% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs. It is a completely balanced dog food suitable for all puppies and junior dogs from 4 weeks of age. The prebiotics in the supplement help to maintain a healthy gut in dogs with sensitive stomachs. It is wheat gluten free with no added artificial colours, preservatives or artificial flavours.



VetSpec **Healthy Dog Adult** Formula

VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula is an outstanding Veterinary Specification Healthy Dog Adult supplement in a CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food including 60% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs. It is a superb product for all dogs including show dogs and working dogs. The specialised supplements include Biotin and other associated nutrients to improve the coat and promote a supple skin for dogs that have problems in this area. The prebiotics in the supplement help to maintain a healthy gut in dogs with sensitive stomachs. It is wheat gluten free with no added artificial colours, preservatives or artificial flavours.



VetSpec **Omega-3 Joint Mobility** Formula

VetSpec Omega-3 Joint Mobility Formula is our highly successful Omega-3 Joint Mobility Supplement and VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula (see above) combined to make one unique Veterinary Specification, CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food. The formula is rich in DHA and EPA (Omega-3s), glucosamine and chondroitin at levels only normally found in veterinary grade nutritional supplements. Omega-3 Joint Mobility Formula is ideal to provide nutritional support for dogs with poor mobility or those in hard work e.g. Dog Agility or Gun Dogs.



VetSpec **Calm & Focused** Formula

VetSpec Calm and Focused Formula is our very effective Calm & Focused Supplement and VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula (see above) combined to make one unique Veterinary Specification, CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food. VetSpec Calm and Focused Formula is ideal for all dogs that get anxious and over-excitabile, suffer from separation anxiety or fear loud noises like fireworks. It is also very helpful when training young dogs to improve focus and obedience. Its formulation includes tryptophan, prebiotics and magnesium.



VetSpec **SuperLite[®] Low-Calorie** Formula

Latest research would indicate that up to 45% of all dogs are overweight and this can lead to clinical problems later in life. VetSpec SuperLite[®] Low-Calorie Formula has all the benefits of VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula (see above) but is on a base food with 20% less calories if fed as directed. This means that you can control your dog's weight but still feed a delicious feed, packed with high quality vitamins and minerals that your dog still needs on a daily basis. VetSpec SuperLite[®] Formula is an outstanding Veterinary Specification supplement in a CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food including 50% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs.



VetSpec **SuperLite[®] Senior** Formula

VetSpec SuperLite[®] Senior Formula is designed to address the nutritional challenges that dogs face as they reach their more senior years. It consists of a complex Veterinary Specification supplement within a CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food including 50% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs. In particular older dogs need optimum nutrition to support a healthy immune system, which means a diet rich in anti-oxidants such as Vitamins A, E, and C and other natural sources. They are also often overweight because they are less likely to be as active and therefore need less calories on a daily basis. Just as important for older dogs is that they need more nutritional support to maintain healthy flexible joints. These complex requirements are all now built into a single delicious complete dog food - VetSpec SuperLite[®] Senior Formula. When fed at the recommended rate additional individual supplements are therefore no longer required.