



John Burns BVMS MRCVS

The idea for **Burns Pet Nutrition** came while working as a Veterinary Surgeon in general practice during the early 90s. I noticed that many pets were suffering from the same ailments time and time again. Believing poor diet to be the primary cause, I recommended that clients feed their dogs home-cooked food to allow the body to function naturally, free from a build-up of toxic waste.

Of course, feeding home-cooked food is a time consuming business, and back in 1993 no brand of healthy pet food existed. This motivated me to develop my own **Original** dry food recipe based on chicken, brown rice and vegetables.

The concept was simple - a complete ready-made diet containing all the benefits of home cooked food.

25 years on, we have a diverse clientele of happy and healthy pets and our product range has evolved to include a number of high-quality diets for dogs, cats and rabbits.

John Burns
Veterinary Surgeon **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

What's the problem?

“Obesity levels are rising with 80% of vets reporting an increase in overweight pets in the last three years and expecting there to be more overweight than healthy-weight pets in 5 years.”

PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report 2014

“Excess weight/obesity is the most common ailment seen by vets in practice. This includes dogs, cats, rabbits, reptiles and even large animal pets. This parallels the growing trend for humans to be overweight. Excessive weight is not always described as a disease and is rarely the primary reason for presentation at a vet's surgery.”

Dr Daniel Chan MRCVS, Senior Lecturer, Royal Veterinary College

It is likely that pet owners are becoming de-sensitised to this issue and having an overweight pet is now seen as normal.

For some breeds it is even seen as a necessity to win in the show ring! Many pet owners are unaware that their pet is overweight and how harmful that can be (see illustrations overleaf which will help you determine if your dog is overweight).

Why is excess weight a problem?

Being overweight is associated with a **reduced lifespan, heart, lung, liver and kidney disease, rheumatism, arthritis, chronic inflammatory disease, and possibly neoplasia (tumour formation).**

What's the answer?

1. The correct type of food

If your dog is substantially overweight, reducing the amount of the normal, everyday diet is not likely to be effective. It is better to feed low-fat food, designed with weight control in mind.

Look for a food low in fat and protein with the higher fibre content. A high fibre food will help to give a sensation of fullness for longer. There are economical alternatives to expensive veterinary-only weight reduction foods on the market.

2. How much to feed?

Food should be weighed and fed according to the desired target weight. The daily amount should then be adjusted according to progress. See our Health Management Programme on Page 35 of my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** handbook.

3. Treats

Treats should be only fed occasionally and not form a significant part of the daily calorie intake. Treats should be low in fat, e.g raw carrot. Other treats, if given at all, should be fed sparingly and taken into account when calculating the daily feeding amount.

4. Exercise

Exercise helps to burn off excess calories and ideally should be done as a routine, including running off the lead where possible. If exercise is a bit daunting it can be introduced in stages, increasing by a few minutes every day. Why not form a dog walking club with friends, or join an agility club?

5. Professional support and advice

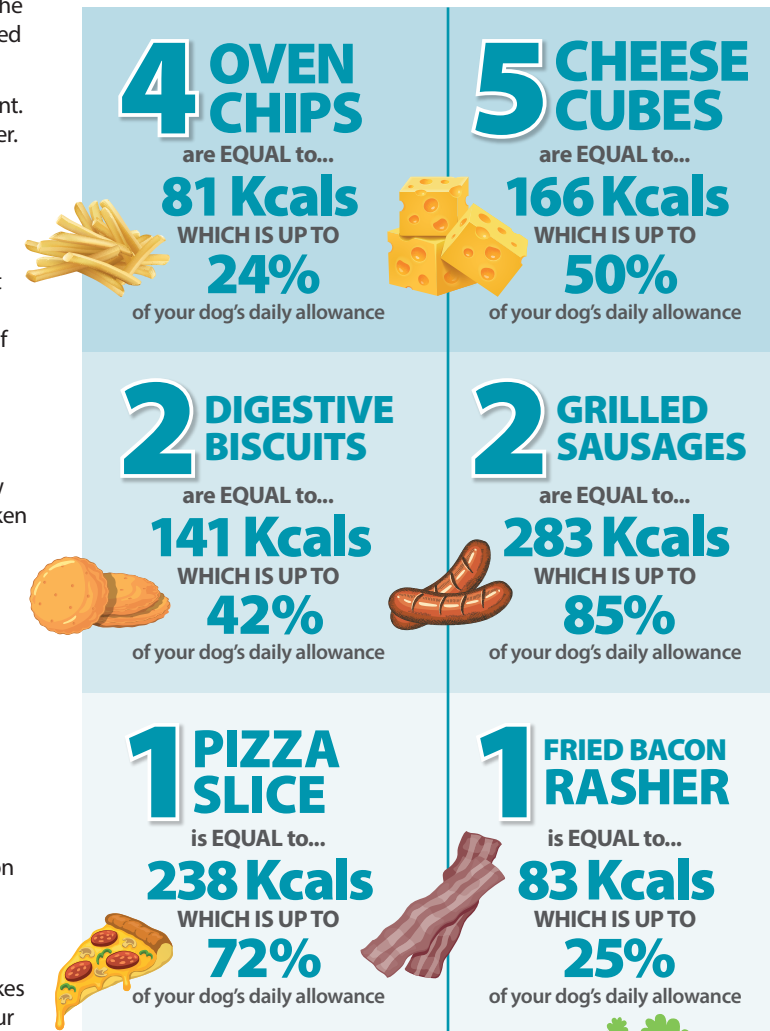
The **Health and Nutrition Advice Team at Burns** can help you to achieve effective weight control of your pet, as well as advising on other diet-related health issues.

Remember...

Using foods to aid weight loss can be painless and easy, but it takes time. It is necessary to be patient and stick to the plan. Weigh your dog regularly and seek advice, especially if you don't see any progress.

Think twice about treats!

While you might think that a lump of cheese here or a digestive biscuit there are safe snacks for your dog, you could actually be feeding him up to half his daily food allowance in a tasty treat! We show you that being discreet with treats will make you more careful with the calories.



Why not try a healthier alternative...

50g of raw baby carrots is a **much** healthier option


3.9%
OF YOUR DOG'S DAILY ALLOWANCE

How to tell if your dog is overweight...

Method one



Lightly run your fingers over your knuckles as you make a fist. If you imagine those knuckles were your dog's ribs, **this would be too thin.**



Put your palm facing up and extend your fingers. Run your fingers over your palm, just below the base of your fingers. If your pet's ribs feel like this **they are overweight.**



Turn your hand over, palm down and feel over your knuckles. When your pet's ribs feel like this it's just right - **a healthy, ideal weight.**

The Burns Health and Nutrition Team (see back of leaflet) can give you individually tailored advice on finding the right food and the right feeding amounts for your dog

Or...

See my **Daily Feeding Amounts** leaflet.

Download it from the Burns website:

(www.burnspet.co.uk) or request a physical copy.

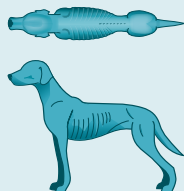


How to tell if your dog is overweight...

Method two

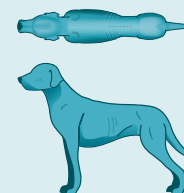
Underweight

Bones (ribs, spine & hips) protruding and can be easily seen in a short coated dog. No body fat visible and waist very obvious. Dog almost looks 'sucked in' after the ribs. In very thin dogs, loss of muscle mass may be evident.



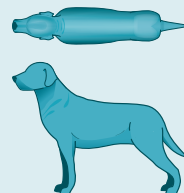
Ideal

Bones (ribs, spine & hips) should be easily felt. In a short coated dog, the last couple of ribs may be visible when twisting and turning during normal play and exercise. A waist should be visible from above and the side (the body should 'tuck in' after the rib cage).



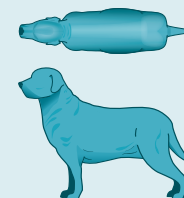
Overweight

Dogs are classed as overweight if they weigh 10-20% more than their ideal body weight.** Difficult to feel the ribs due to fat covering. Fat deposits visible over the body including the belly and base of the tail. The waist is starting to disappear – minimal abdominal tuck after the ribs when looking from above. Back looks broader.



Obese

Dogs are classed as obese if they weigh 20% more than their ideal body weight **. Ribs cannot be felt due to heavy covering of fat. Fat deposits visible over the spine and base of the tail. Fat rolls visible around the neck and chest and the belly may be drooping. Waistline has been lost so when you look from above there is no abdominal tuck after the ribs.



**Toll P, et al. 2010. Obesity. In: Hand M, et al. 2010., (eds). Small Animal Clinical Nutrition, 5th ed. Topeka, KS: Mark Morris Institute p501.



NATURAL
FOOD FOR PETS
DOG | CAT | RABBIT

Promotes excellent health, and for dogs prone to...

- Itchy skin/ears/feet • Upset digestion • Poo eating
- Weight problems • Bad breath • Body odour
- Full anal glands • Persistent moulting • Behaviour problems
- Lack of vitality • Stiffness • Tear staining
- Fussy eating • Tooth tartar

All of these may be diet related

Support when you need it

Our **expert pet nutritionists** can give you straightforward and **individually tailored** advice on managing nutritional support for specific health problems or fine tuning feeding amounts.

Freephone **0800 083 66 96**

Ireland (freephone) **1800 836696**

Email **info@burnspet.co.uk**

Live chat • Online now!
www.burnspet.co.uk

This leaflet is part of a series on health and nutrition written by John Burns.

For more information please see my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** booklet which can be downloaded from **www.burnspet.co.uk** or request a paper copy



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THE VETERINARY GUIDE TO WEIGHT CONTROL

By **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

