Body Condition Score (BCS) for Dogs

Very Thin
20% under ideal weight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are easily visible (coat may interfere with observation)
- Fat can not be seen or felt under the skin
- Obvious loss of muscle mass
- Extreme waist and abdominal tuck

Thin
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are easily felt and visible
- Fat can not be seen or felt under the skin, especially around the ribs and lower back
- Obvious waist and abdominal tuck
- Some muscle loss

Ideal
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are easily felt and may be visible (coat may interfere with visibility)
- A waist and abdominal tuck are seen when viewed from above and side
- Fat can be felt around ribs, spine and hip bones

Overweight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are not visible and difficult to feel
- Excess fat is felt around ribs, spine and hip bones
- Waist and abdominal tuck are minimal or absent

Obesity
30% over ideal weight
- Ribs, spine and hip bones are difficult to feel under a thick layer of fat
- Waist and abdomen distended when viewed from above and side
- Prominent fat deposits over lower spine, neck and chest


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### What is a Body Condition Score (BCS)?

Body Condition Score (BCS) is a screening tool used to estimate body fat accumulation in an animal. Body condition scores are most accurate when performed by a trained professional.

### Common Weight-Related Diseases in Dogs

- Arthritis & osteoarthritis
- Asthma & respiratory disease
- Bladder & urinary tract disease
- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Hip, elbow, & shoulder dysplasia
- Hypertension
- Hypothyroidism
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Reproductive disease
- Skin disease

### Why is my pet overweight or has a high BCS?

**Awareness & Recognition**

Obesity is a complex disease influenced by several factors, including genetics, medical conditions, caloric intake, diet and feeding habits, physical activity, and general lifestyle.

A human-animal-family treatment approach works best if your pet has been identified as over their ideal body condition.

**Develop a nutritional management, exercise, and medical plan with your veterinarian and pet healthcare team.**

### How does excess body weight affect my dog's health?

- Decreased life expectancy
- Chronic pain
- Poor quality of life

### Next steps

- Identify & treat any underlying medical conditions
- Calculate daily caloric needs
- Select a diet
- Create a healthy feeding & treat program
- Feed pets separately
- Aim for 30 minutes of daily aerobic activity
- Weigh monthly
- Involve the entire family

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The number of pets that are overweight or have obesity (BCS 6-9) continues to increase in the U.S. and globally. Obesity is a complex, multifactorial disease that requires early recognition and intervention to achieve a healthy body condition, prevent secondary medical problems, extend longevity, and improve quality of life.

Pet owners often underestimate their pet’s ideal or healthy body condition. If excess fat accumulation and obesity are unrecognized, untreated, or unmanaged, it can lead to many weight-related health problems, including decreased life expectancy, chronic pain, and poor quality of life.

The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to the awareness, prevention, and treatment of pets with obesity and weight-related disorders. We are committed to making the lives of dogs, cats, all other animals, and people healthier and more vital.

[www.petobesityprevention.org](http://www.petobesityprevention.org)