



Food for thought

Food is not only a requirement in order to live and function normally, but we also love it and so do our pets!

Food, however, is not all equal.

When it comes to feeding our pets, not only do we want to feed them something that they enjoy eating, but we also want to make sure that the food we are feeding is ticking all the right boxes for optimum health.

It can be extremely confusing trying to decide on the best food to suit your pet's needs, especially when there are a lot of different information and opinions to take into consideration.

Ideally what we want from our pet's food is something that is tasty, provides long lasting energy and also helps to prevent any health issues from arising and/or slow down the progression of any pre-existing health concerns.

What health issues can a diet help prevent?

- ✓ Malnourishment, but more commonly obesity
- ✓ Lacklustre coat and skin issues often associated with a poor skin barrier
- ✓ Dental and gum disease
- ✓ Bone and joint issues, often due to either growing too quickly or not receiving enough nutrition while growing



Chocolate free Easter

for your pets

Did you know that chocolate can be toxic, sometimes even fatal, for animals?

Got your pet's Easter treats?

Dogs are the most commonly affected, as their keen sense of smell means they are able to track down hidden chocolate stashes! The cause of the problem is Theobromine; a toxic compound similar to caffeine which is found in chocolate. Save the chocolate for yourself, get your pet their own treats this Easter.



Keep your bunny safe, vaccinate NOW

As you have probably heard in the media, the Korean Rabbit Calici Virus is to be released soon in New Zealand. We recommend that you vaccinate any pet rabbit over 10 weeks old, that hasn't been vaccinated in the last year, and ensure you follow up with a booster annually.

Extra protection can be achieved with the following Biosecurity Measures

1. Control insects (especially flies and fleas) as much as possible both indoors and outdoors. Flies are the main vector through which the virus is spread.
2. Remove uneaten food on a daily basis.
3. Keep your pet rabbit indoors where possible.
4. Rabbit-proof your backyard to prevent access by wild rabbits.
5. Regularly decontaminate equipment and materials (e.g. cages, hutches, bowls) with either 10% bleach or 10% sodium hydroxide. 10 minutes contact times is required, then rinse off.
6. Limit contact with and handling of unfamiliar pet rabbits.
7. Use good biosecurity measures (e.g. wash hands, shoes and clothing) after handling other people's rabbits.
8. Avoid cutting grass and feeding it to your rabbits if there is the risk of contamination from wild rabbits.

Please ring your Anexa Vet clinic to make an appointment to vaccinate your pet rabbits.



Underweight

*what could it mean
for your pet*

- ! Young animals – poor growth and bone development leading to early onset arthritis / organ dysfunction
- ! Compromises organ function and over all length of life
- ! Pain – skeletal protrusion can be uncomfortable, pressure sores can develop
- ! Electrolyte imbalance – this can be related to disease processes
- ! Higher chance of contracting disease as compromised immune system
- ! May be affected by the cold more as struggle to regulate body temperature
- ! Muscle wastage
- ! Working dogs – struggle to work as minimal fat reserves means very minimal energy stores for a days work



Overweight

*What could it mean
for your pet*

- ! Heat intolerance
- ! Decreased stamina
- ! Decreased immune function
- ! Difficulty breathing
- ! Digestive disorders
- ! Skin and hair coat problems
- ! Damaged joints, bones, and ligaments
- ! Heart disease
- ! Increased blood pressure
- ! Decreased liver function
- ! Increased surgical and anaesthetic risk
- ! Increased risk of cancer
- ! Diabetes mellitus - cats



How do I decide what diet is best for my pet?

Dietary requirements vary between species and different life stages ie. puppies need to be fed differently from adults. They also vary between breeds, due to the large variety of sizes. The first thing to do is to think about what life-stage your pet is currently in. The life stages are junior, adult and geriatric. To complicate things slightly, it also depends on the species and breed/size of your pet as to where they sit in terms of life stages. For example a 9 year old cat is classed as senior, whereas a 9 year old Great Dane is closer to geriatric.

Puppies and kittens

Puppies and kittens are going through their crucial growing stage that will set them up for life. It is extremely important to have these animals on a specified puppy/kitten diet that will contain the right levels of nutrients to support their growth and bone development. Puppy food is also split into small, medium and large breed – so you need to be feeding the right puppy food for the size your puppy will be when it is an adult.

Adults

Adult foods are split into size ranges or to specifically target a particular problem condition that we want to manage. A large or giant breed dog will generally have very high energy requirements, paired with long legs and big bodies to carry (think of a Great Dane or Labrador). Size specific food provides plenty of extra support for their bones and joints in order to prevent and/or delay injury and osteoarthritis.

A small breed dog may have moderate to high energy requirements for their size/breed, but their bones and joints are much more able to cope due to their smaller overall size. However, these dogs are prone to dental disease, due to smaller mouths and teeth that sit closer together. Diets for these dogs need to provide the correct energy requirements as well as contribute to oral health.

When it comes to cats, we are often focussing more on prevention of common diseases such as dental disease, obesity and kidney disease.

It is important not to forget that cats can be anything from as lazy as they come (sleeping all day, eating, then sleeping some more) to keen hunters who are always on the go. We must consider this when choosing a diet specific to our cats' needs, as it simply does not make sense to feed the same amount and type of food to a very active, lean and muscular cat, as well as an extremely lazy, overweight cat. There are also diets for cats who are stress-prone, to aid in calming and relaxing them through use of special formulations in their food.

Geriatric

In our old animals we are often choosing a diet that will support our animal through any specific pre-existing health issues (this can range from kidney or liver disease to skin/coat or dental issues). These diets often have lower energy content as our pets are often less active at this stage and we want to prevent them becoming (or reverse them from being) overweight, in order to help protect their worn joints.

Success Story!

Buddy's owners read about our Healthy Weight Promotion last year and jumped to the chance to have some help getting their Labrador back in shape. Regular visits resulted in 5 kg weight loss, which he has maintained over the past 4 months.

We are all proud and stoked with this success story and Buddy thinks that visits to the clinic are the best outing ever!! It can be a bit tricky to get a weigh-in with this big bouncing boy!

Anne Gelling Veterinarian, Anexa Te Aroha

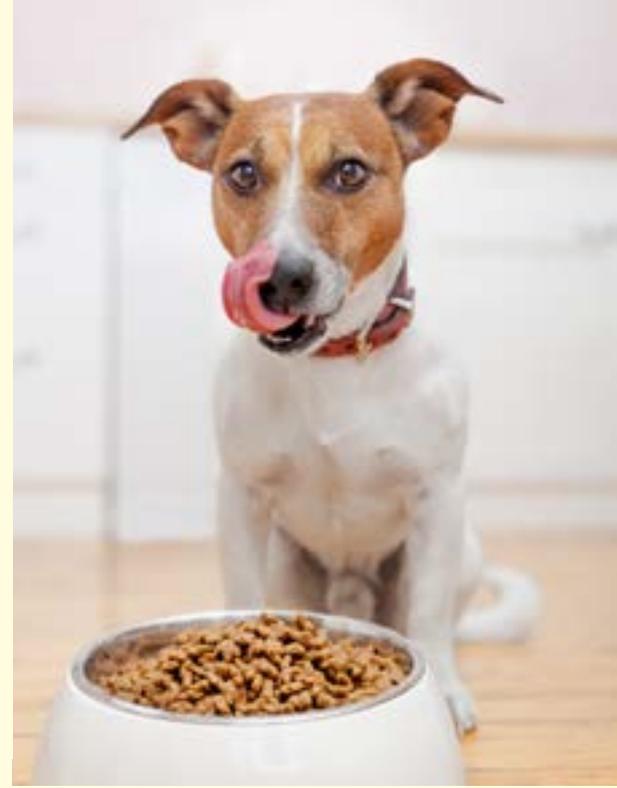


Quality of a diet

Just like human food, there is a huge difference in quality between pet foods. It can seem like a good idea to purchase a cheaper food that looks to have all the right information on the label, however remember that although these foods may have the correct main ingredients, these ingredients may not be at the correct levels. Additionally, these foods often contain a large amount of 'fillers'. These are just extra bits and pieces that have no real nutritional value, and are simply there to fill in space and bulk out the food. With these foods, you will find you need to feed more food in order to fulfil your pets' nutritional requirements.

Feeding a higher quality food may cost you more initially, but will last you longer as you can feed a smaller amount in order to maintain optimum nutrition. This means that you may actually find you are either spending the same amount by feeding a better food, or possibly even saving money in the long run.

This is not to mention that the higher quality foods have sound research behind them to ensure they are nutritionally complete and so that we can be confident we are feeding our pets the best diet possible.



Convenience

In this day and age, convenience is a big factor for the majority of people when it comes to decision making. Ensuring you are feeding a high quality diet provides extra convenience through:

- ✓ Feeding less, pay minimal overall cost
- ✓ Feeding less = less faeces to pick up
- ✓ Higher quality food with minimal 'fillers' = less odour
- ✓ Higher quality food = potential for less additional medication or other supplements required i.e. for bones and joints, skin and coat, teeth etc. This saves money, time and stress.

When you are looking to choose a diet for your new pet, or if it is time to re-assess the diet your pet is currently on, stop in at your local Anexa FVC clinic to have a chat to one of our helpful veterinarians or veterinary nurses. We can help to match a diet specifically to your beloved pet and their current needs. Remember, "You are what you eat". So let's think nutritionally balanced and complete.

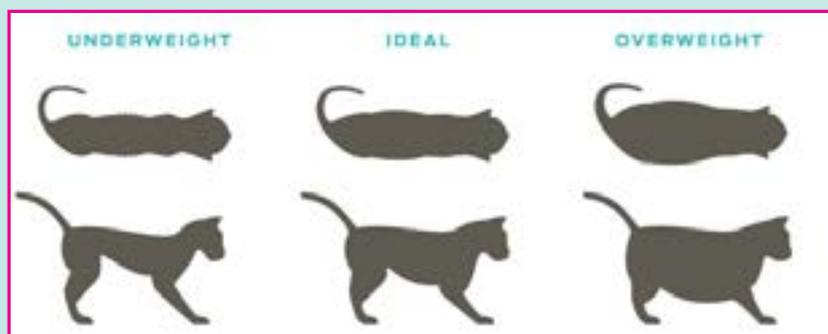
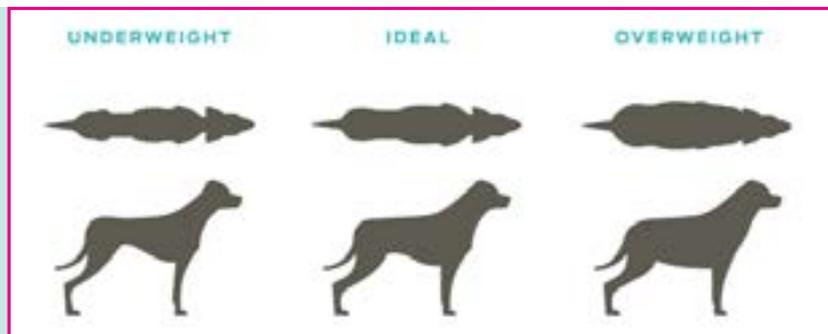
So what size is Healthy?

It can feel as if it isn't such a terrible thing for your cat or dog to be a bit on the heavy side, so long as they seem reasonably happy and healthy.

However, extra kilos increase the likelihood of several weight related diseases and issues as well as potentially restricting natural behaviours which are part of your pet's general wellbeing.

Ultimately, a pet which is overweight or underweight will not live as long as a pet at a healthy weight.

Unsure if your pet is sitting at a healthy weight? Book a Healthy Pet Weight Consult at your local Anexa clinic. We can examine your pet, discuss any concerns you may have and help you come up with a plan so your pet is an ideal weight for their breed, age and stage.



Toffee the Staffy X

Toffee is a female Staffy X, approx. 10 years old, owned by one of our vet nurse's family members. Toffee's owner rang to have a chat to his sister, as Toffee has been vomiting for a day & a night. She was very bright and alert, but couldn't keep any food down. Toffee was on once a day feeding, normally having a big plate of the family left overs for her dinner. Luckily enough, our vet nurse recognized the symptoms and brought her into work to be checked over.

Though still very bright and happy to run around, Toffee had a very sore stomach, and couldn't keep any food down. She was sitting at a healthy weight and very active, but we still had our suspicions. A blood test was taken, showing that she had raised Amylase and Lipase enzymes, which are found in the Pancreas, and was suffering from a case of Acute Pancreatitis. Toffee was still able to drink and had a good appetite, she just wasn't able to keep it down in large quantities. Due to Toffees pancreatitis being not too severe, she was left for most of the day with only small amounts of water at a time, giving her stomach a chance to settle down. We started with small amounts of a very bland, low fat, easily digested food, a tablespoon at a time. It took 3 days of her on bland food, feeding 4 times a day, before we started her back on plain dog biscuits. It took a further 3 days before we dropped her down to bigger meals, twice a day.

Toffee has been happily living on dog biscuits now. And though she still occasionally sneaks food from the kids, she hasn't had another episode. Toffees owners are very good at maintaining a good weight, but after swapping her onto dog biscuits, her coat and shape has greatly improved. She is also a lot happier in herself. Due to being caught quickly, her bill was 'cheap' at \$250, but could easily have been triple that.



How you feed your pet is just as important as what you feed your pet

With your pets, it is just as important to have good habits around feeding routines as it is to feed a nutritionally balanced diet.

Wild animals have to work for their food, and it makes sense to do the same for our pets. Designing games and tricks to slow the feeding process keeps feeding time fun and interesting. It also stops them from gorging on their food. There are many ways to achieve this, such as maze bowls.

It is also recommended that dogs are walked or played with before getting food, to take the focus off of feeding time for those very "food-orientated" dogs. These dogs also benefit from being asked to "sit" or "wait" before being allowed to eat.

While most dogs are fine with being fed together, cats are solitary hunters and often prefer to be fed alone. It is common to find that one cat will dominate the food bowl, causing other cats to miss out on their full meal. Also, with separate feeding, cats at different lifestages or with different health problems can be fed different diets.

Three Easy Rules to Help Avoid Pancreatitis

1. Maintain your pet at a healthy weight; regular weight checks will help.
2. Avoid high fat diets, unless your dog requires the extra energy (e.g. working dogs, puppies)
3. Avoid large, one off, fatty meals. Human food can be very rich and high in fats, making dog biscuits the better option.



Easter clinic hours

Friday 30th March: All Clinics will be closed

Saturday 31st March

Anexa Morrinsville, Raglan & Thames open 9am - 12pm

Other clinics closed

Monday 2nd April: All Clinics will be closed

Our afterhours emergency service is available during this time phone 0800 284 3838



Have you joined our flea treatment reminder service? Ask about it next time you pick up your flea treatment.



Your local Vet, passionate about pets 0800 284 3838 | anexafc.co.nz



Coromandel
P: 07 866 8556
Gordonton
P: 07 824 2103

Huntly
P: 07 828 7660
Maramarua
P: 09 232 5891

Matamata
P: 07 888 8068
Morrinsville
P: 07 889 5159

Ngaruawahia
P: 07 824 8630
Ngatea
P: 07 867 7256

Paeroa
P: 07 862 8815
Raglan
P: 07 825 8390

Rototuna
P: 07 853 0027
Te Aroha
P: 07 884 8014

Te Kauwhata
P: 07 826 3581
Thames
P: 07 868 7005