

TO YOUR *Pet's* Health

NEW YEAR'S Resolutions

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It's that time of year to be thinking of your New Year's Resolutions. What a great time to be thinking about what you can be doing to keep your beloved pet healthy. One of the most important things you can do for your pet is to keep him or her at a healthy weight.

Nutrition is a topic that will have one of the biggest impacts on your pet's overall health. This is a conversation that should start with your veterinarian when you first adopt your new pet, whether as a puppy or kitten, or as an adult. It should continue to be talked about throughout your pet's different life stages.

We often do not consider that as our pet ages, they do not need as many calories as when they were younger and more active. However, your pet often feels like they need to consume the same amount of food. If these changes are not considered, then your pet will start gaining weight. Diets have been formulated that take the age and activity level of a pet into account. Not every animal fits perfectly into one type of food. This is a great conversation to have with your Vet so that they can advise and help you choose the right one for your pet. They can also help determine what the ideal weight for your pet is and some visual clues that you can use to keep their pet's weight on target.

That dreaded word...obesity. Similar to the obesity issues seen in today's American human population, this issue is becoming a huge (no pun intended) problem in our pet population as well. It has been estimated by the

Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) in a 2017 Survey, that over 56% of the dogs and 60% of cats in the U.S. are overweight or obese. Each year this number continues to rise. Check out petobesityprevention.org.

What are some causes of this epidemic? One of the biggest causes is that people love their pets and equate love with food. It is certainly not a crime to love your pet, but a healthy weight needs to be determined and goals set to achieve and maintain that weight. Also, remember that every treat your pet receives during the day adds extra calories. So, try to minimize the number of treats given, and look for healthy alternatives, like green beans, squash, or carrots.

Why is this such an important issue? The bottom line is research has shown that if a healthy weight is not maintained throughout an animal's life it can lead to multiple health issues, including but not limited to: diabetes, breathing issues, heart disease, high blood pressure, liver disease or dysfunction, arthritis, cancer and a decreased life span. In other words, your pet may not live as long as it has the potential of living and in the process can develop a disease that may decrease their quality of life.

What a great New Year's Resolution, finding and maintaining your pet's healthiest weight! The Staff at Blue River Veterinary Clinic would like to wish everyone a Happy and Prosperous 2021!



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