

THE COVID 10 OR 15 ?????

We've all jokingly been talking of the Covid 10 or 15. Of course putting on weight is no joke to any of us, cuz it's so darn hard to get it off. Even with the incentive that we know extra weight isn't good for us still we struggle.

There seems to be some evidence that our pets are picking up those extra pounds too. This may be because we're home, we love our pets, it makes us feel good to give them treats when they look at us with those innocent "I love you eyes." As the pandemic wears on we can become more depressed and sedentary and isolated. Of course, our cats and dogs don't get Covid so they are safe and we "veg out" (in this case I don't mean we eat more vegetables) with them. Being a good canine/feline parent has many similarities to being a good parent to our human children. The fun part is indulging them, the not so fun part is setting limits and saying "no" when they want to hear "yes".

I once acquired a dog who was quite "chubby". In a discussion with my veterinarian I said "I have heard dogs on diets whine and cry because they are on a diet and are hungry. I can't bear the thought of that." She told me to add vegetables to her kibble and I did. It took me a year and half but my dog lost 18 pounds and looked great and maintained that weight until she died many years later at 14 years old. Over those years she received some treats but I monitored them closely. You do want to be sure that you continue to provide good nutrition for your pet. You can receive nutritional advice from your veterinarian and sometimes the staff in the pet food stores can be helpful too.

Cats need to consume about 20 calories per pound per day. That means your 10 pound cat should be eating about 200 calories a day. That's not very much. I know it is more difficult to exercise your cat than your dog, but you can find something they like to do that gets them moving to burn off a few calories. One of my cats liked a little light that I could flash around and she would chase. Some cats like a feather at the end of a stick that might look a bit like a bird. Some cats will even chase a ball. There are fake mice that cats enjoy batting around and chasing. You can also get ideas from the internet on how to get some

exercise for
your cat.

From a health perspective overweightness makes your pet more susceptible to many health conditions, such as diabetes, pancreatitis, urinary track problems, gastrointestinal distress, heart problems, liver disease, damage to joints, bones and ligaments, and even cancer. Should your pet need surgery it will be more difficult to perform the needed surgery, as well as make it more dangerous to anesthetize your pet. Obesity will definitely reduce your pet's quality of life and decrease its longevity. We love our pets and want to have fun with them and have them live a healthy and long life.

You can determine if your pet is overweight by a visual scan and also by feeling it's body. If it is severely overweight it's breathing may be labored and the animal may seem to have very little energy as well as other tell tale signs. If you are unsure consult with your veterinarian and seek some guidance.

Your pet needs good nutritional food in appropriate amounts and your pet needs exercise to healthily come out the other side of this dreadful pandemic. Covid has affected them even though they don't get Covid.