



## WEIGHT WATCHERS FOR CATS!

**Obesity** is the **most common nutritional problem** cats face. It is becoming as serious a problem for cats in Western society as it is for people. They run the risk of many of the **same complications as we do**. The extra weight places stress on the musculo-skeletal system predisposing your cat to **arthritis**. Other complications include **constipation**, poor coat (often a **greasy coat with dandruff**) and associated skin infections because of the decreased ability to groom. **Incidence of cancer** and overall resistance to disease rises and being overweight is a noted risk factor for **urinary tract disease** such as urinary obstruction.

Overweight cats who suddenly go off food (say from being unwell for another reason) can set up a **potentially fatal liver complication** called hepatic lipidosis. A very common complication of being overweight in cats is **diabetes**. We **can** sometimes **cure** the diabetes (usually after treating with insulin for a time) by **getting the cat to lose weight**.

Cats get fat for the same reasons people do, that is, **too many calories eaten and not enough exercise**. The way for cat to lose weight is also the same as for people: eat less and exercise more. For very big cats, we will usually cut out dry food entirely (at least until they have lost weight to a normal level) to **reduce** the amount of **calories** and carbohydrates. There is one low carbohydrate dry food that is currently only available as a prescription diet.

We also recommend introducing a **regular exercise routine** by having a set-time (say, when you get home from work) of 30 minutes activity of chasing toy mouse or laser pointer (or whatever your cat likes and works for you).

Big cats will usually sit down after 2-3min....that's okay, let them rest for a bit and then get them moving again. Soon the length of the breaks reduces and the exercise time increases. Once they have lost a bit of weight, they naturally become more active and the weight loss becomes self-fulfilling.

If you'd like to track your cat's weight loss progress, we can arrange regular visits for 'weigh-ins' and even chart your cat's progress.