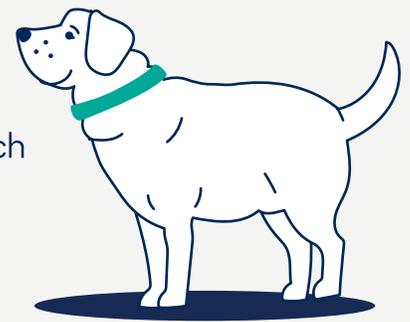


# What Is a Healthy Weight for Dogs?

As a pet parent, you may be wondering what an ideal weight is for your pup.

A wide range of body sizes and types exist among dog breeds, which can make it difficult to determine the right weight for your pet.

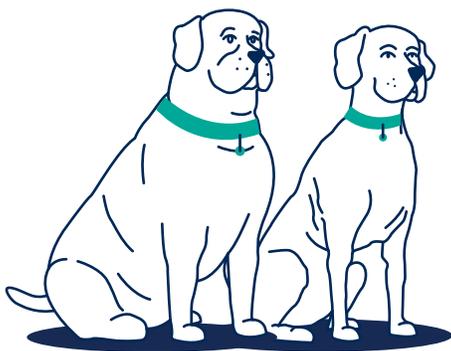
Instead of using a generic weight chart, veterinarians use a combination of your dog's body weight and their body condition score (BCS) to understand what their goal weight is.



## How Is My Dog's Body Condition Score Calculated?

A dog's BCS is typically assessed by veterinarians on a 9-point scale, and dogs that score in the middle of the scale (a 4 or 5 out of 9) have a healthy body condition.

Dogs scoring 1 to 3 are considered too thin, and a score of 6 or 7 may mean that a dog is overweight. Obese dogs typically receive BCS scores of 8 or 9. Very obese dogs can have a BCS greater than 9.



**BCS is evaluated by examining a pet's ribs, abdomen, and waistline by sight and by touch:**

- A pup's ribs should be visible and covered by a small amount of fat.
- When viewed from above, the dog's waistline should be noticeable in a subtle inward curve behind the ribs. A side view of the dog should reveal an "abdominal tuck," or a slight upward curve of the belly behind the ribs.
- Overweight dogs have excess fat covering their ribs and will lack a noticeable waistline or abdominal tuck.
- Underweight dogs have a more prominent waistline and abdominal tuck, and their ribs, pelvis, and vertebrae will be protruding and lack fat.

# What Is a Healthy Weight for Dogs?

## How Can I Figure Out My Dog's Goal Weight?

Knowing your dog's ideal body weight can help you and your vet plan a successful weight loss program for your pet. It can also let you know what your pet should weigh if your pet is underweight or losing weight.

To understand what weight your pup should be, talk with your veterinarian. They can help you calculate the right number for your specific pet.

## How Can I Help My Dog Lose Weight?

Before putting your dog on a weight loss/exercise plan, make sure to get approval from their veterinarian.

Pet weight loss programs usually involve some degree of calorie restriction to help your dog lose weight at a gradual pace. By having a target body weight in mind, your veterinarian can help estimate your dog's daily caloric needs so that you know exactly how much to feed your dog.

Through diet modification and regular exercise, your dog's metabolic needs will likely change as they begin to lose weight. This is why regular monitoring—including monthly weigh-ins and BCS measurements—is important to help your pet reach his target body condition in a safe and healthy manner.

A few exercises you can do with your pup include:

### Low-Impact Exercise

- Walking

### Moderate Exercise

- Jogging
- Hiking (flat trail)
- Playing fetch

### Strenuous Exercise

- Running
- Hiking (with hills)
- Swimming
- Playing a more intense game of fetch
- Agility training

### Mentally Stimulating Exercise

- Trying a new walking route
- Training exercises
- Playing with puzzle games and feeders
- Scent training
- Agility training

## How Can I Help My Dog Gain Weight?

If your pet's not at the weight they should be, you can work with your veterinarian to find out if you should be increasing their food intake or whether it's caused by an underlying health issue. Inexplicable weight loss can be a result of several conditions. Whether your pet is overweight or underweight, your vet can help figure out the issue and tailor recommendations to their individual needs.