

# OAK FOREST Veterinary Hospital

Pet Talk

Fall 2021

## Feline Obesity

### How Fat Is Too Fat?

Photos of grossly overweight cats that make the rounds on social media may be humorous, but obesity is a serious issue that can affect your cat's health, lifespan and quality of life. An estimated 60% of cats in the U.S. are overweight or obese, which reflects a disturbing increase in feline obesity in recent years. Overfeeding and feeding the wrong diet are the primary causes of obesity. Your cat should be fed at specific mealtimes with any remaining food removed until the next feeding.

A cat is generally considered obese if its body weight is 20% or more above normal weight. This extra weight places a strain on the joints, exacerbating conditions such as hip dysplasia and osteoarthritis. Excess pounds place a burden on the heart and vascular system as well, which can lead to heart conditions. Obesity can also trigger the development of diabetes in cats, a rising trend in feline health.

Most dry cat foods are high in carbohydrates, which not only contributes to obesity but is contrary to the dietary needs of felines. Cats are natural carnivores and need a diet primarily comprised of protein. They lack the digestive enzymes to efficiently convert plants into usable energy. High carbohydrates contribute to high blood glucose levels that can lead to diabetes mellitus. High-quality canned foods are more likely to provide the levels of fats and protein cats need. They are also high in water content to help keep them hydrated. Insufficient hydration can lead to urinary tract and kidney issues.

Suddenly changing or reducing your cat's food can pose health risks, so be sure to contact us before putting kitty on a diet. We will be happy to recommend a proper, balanced diet to meet your cat's natural dietary needs and keep weight at a healthy level.



## Doctor's Notes

### Pets and COVID-19

At the beginning of the pandemic, we had many concerned pet parents asking us if their pets were at risk of contracting COVID-19. At that time, we simply didn't know. In addition to making changes to keep our humans safe, we stayed on top of the science to be prepared in case the virus became epidemic among pets. Fortunately, reported cases of cats and dogs becoming infected with this specific virus were rare.

The few reported cases of COVID-19 in pets were in homes where humans were positive, so we know that this novel coronavirus can jump to other species. This also tells us that the number of infected pets was likely higher than reported. However, among the cases that were confirmed, most pets had no symptoms or were mildly symptomatic, and no deaths were reported.

It's always a good idea to keep pets isolated from sick humans since some diseases can transfer between species; however, you should never wipe or spray pets with antibacterial substances or put a mask on them. Be assured that with any disease affecting pets, we will always stay up to date with the latest science to keep you and your pets safe.



## Cherry Eye in Dogs

### Treating a Prolapsed Third Eyelid Gland

Did you know that dogs have an additional eyelid located in the corner of the eye? This eyelid contains a gland that produces much of the eye's protective tears. "Cherry eye" is an informal term for prolapse—or protrusion—of the third eyelid gland. The eyelid becomes swollen and inflamed with a characteristic red bulge.

While it isn't known what causes this condition, certain breeds, such as spaniels and beagles, are more predisposed to cherry eye. It can occur in cats as well. Because the tear gland within the third eyelid is important to eye health, dogs that have this symptom need to see us to prevent long-term damage. Scratching at the affected eye can cause injury or infection, and they have a greater risk for secondary corneal disease.

We will perform a complete exam to determine if there are other existing conditions. Depending on the severity of the condition, treatment can range from warm compresses and close monitoring to surgery to suture the prolapsed structure back into place.



## Raccoon Danger

### How to Keep Your Pet Safe

Several things about your home may be attractive to raccoons and encountering these wild animals can be lethal to your pets. If they become physically engaged, even a larger dog may not fare well. They are strong for their size and have razor-sharp claws and teeth. Veterinarians can often distinguish a raccoon attack from that of other animals by the severity of the injuries.



A raccoon bite can transmit several diseases to your pet, especially rabies. Approximately 40% of all rabies cases reported in the U.S. can be traced to raccoon encounters. If your pet is bitten by a raccoon, this is always an emergency, and you should contact us immediately.

However, dogs and cats don't need to come face-to-face with a raccoon to become infected by one of the many diseases they can carry. Through contact with raccoon urine, feces or saliva, diseases such as Leptospirosis, Giardia, Canine Distemper and roundworm can make your pet seriously ill. Some diseases they carry can infect humans as well.

The best way to prevent these diseases is to keep pets supervised when outdoors, keep their food and water indoors, and keep trash containers securely sealed. Be sure your pet is always current on vaccines. A lapse in your vaccination schedule can leave your pets vulnerable to otherwise preventable diseases.

Call us at (713) 682-6351 today to make an appointment!

# Knee Injuries in Dogs

## Recognizing Cruciate Ligament Ruptures

As with humans, your dog's knees are susceptible to sudden injury or long-term degeneration. The two cruciate ligaments in a dog's knee joint connect the femur (thigh bone) to the tibia (shin bone). When the ligament tears, the femur slides on the back of the tibia causing pain, inflammation and lameness. Cruciate surgery is the most common orthopedic surgery performed in dogs.

A ligament can rupture completely or partially. A complete tear, called an ACL or CCL tear, most often happens from hyperextension of the knee joint when a dog is jumping, running or playing. You may hear your dog yelp in pain or may just observe that he cannot put weight on a hind leg. In the case of a partial tear, you may notice a limp.

Dogs of any age or breed can suffer cruciate ligament injuries, but overweight dogs are more susceptible. The extra weight can cause the joint to deteriorate. It is not uncommon for osteoarthritis to develop in an affected knee.

It's important to bring your dog to see us anytime they are limping. Although other conditions can cause lameness, a cruciate ligament tear is a painful condition that needs prompt treatment. Surgery is recommended for complete ruptures, although we may discuss other options for treating partial tears.

Although cruciate ligament injuries aren't entirely preventable, you can lessen the risk by keeping your pup from jumping off decks or furniture, keeping joints flexible with normal exercise, and keeping weight under control.



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Refer a new client and save \$10 on your next doctor's visit.

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