

BVA, BVNA, BVZS and BEVA Action plan: Weight management and obesity prevention in companion animals

There are many ways that vets and vet nurses can actively contribute to the prevention of obesity in companion animals - from regularly monitoring the weight and body conditions, to raising awareness about the importance of healthy body conditions and appropriate diets with pet owners.

Below BVA, BVNA, BVZS and BEVA have identified a range of interventions that vets and vet nurses can undertake at an individual, practice and association level to make a difference through their day-to-day activities:

At an individual level	At a practice level	At an association level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use appropriate body condition scoring alongside routine monitoring of body weight to prevent and identify the development of obesity. ✓ Monitor body condition score, and body weight measurements during a puppy, kitten or young rabbit's growth phase. This will enable weight management and provide an opportunity to educate owners about healthy weights and feeding practices. ✓ Check the body condition score and body weight of animals at least once a year and discuss this with owners at each health check. More frequent monitoring of body condition score and body weight is strongly advised in animals that are obese or are at risk of obesity. ✓ Be clear, supportive and sensitive when speaking to pet owners about weight management and obesity in their animals. ✓ Take the time to explain to owners why diet, exercise and weight management is important for their pet's health and welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage clients to regularly visit their vet or vet nurse to weigh their pets and discuss the importance of a healthy body condition and weight. ✓ Make sure practice policies support staff to appropriately convey evidence-based information and advice about obesity to clients in a timely and supportive manner. ✓ Make sure that employees are familiar and confident with using body scoring scales consistently for the species they treat. ✓ Make sure that practice marketing materials depict animals with mid-range body conditions, a suitable diet, and a suitable environment to meet their physical needs. (See BVA Pets in advertising: A social concern, good practice guidance for use of pet animals in advertising for more information). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Educate and influence all organisations and stakeholders within the animal sector to promote healthy body conditions and diets. ✓ Support and harness the influence of the veterinary professions to raise client awareness of the health and welfare implications of obesity, risk factors, and the importance of discussing diet, exercise and weight management with a vet or vet nurse. ✓ Promote the use of body condition scoring of animals amongst vets, vet nurses and animal owners. ✓ Develop 'tool kits' with resources and information to support members to prevent, manage and communicate with clients about the importance of healthy, mid-range, body conditions. For great examples of this, check out the PFMA Healthy Weight Management Hub and BEVA's Obesity in horses: Resources and guidance related to tackling obesity

[Read the BVA, BVNA, BVZS and BEVA position on obesity in dogs, cats, horses, donkeys and rabbits in full](#)