**OBESITY**

Please excuse the pun here, but obesity is a huge problem in many of the dogs and cats we see in the surgery. Obesity carries many risks to your pet and can easily lead to serious and potentially irreversible health problems.

These may include:

* Increased fat around vital organs (eg, heart, kidneys, lungs and liver) reducing how well these organs function and can eventually lead to organ failure.
* Excess weight leads to increased strain on joints and can lead to early onset arthritis.
* An increased risk of developing diabetes due to insulin resistance.
* Obese animals pose a very high anaesthetic risk.
* Increased blood pressure which can lead to an array of other problems.

**What Can Be Done?**

When looking at the list of possible consequences of obesity it becomes obvious that this is something we want to avoid at all costs and the most obvious way of doing this is to start them on a diet. **I could write a long list of instructions here of the best way to implement certain changes and how to reduce food intake etc. However, we have found from experience that best results are seen by clients who come to a weight clinic with one of our nurses.**

During these sessions they will chat through all your options including different food choices, exercise ideas and provide a good framework for regular weight checks which help you to monitor progress and make changes as necessary along the way.

**Foods**

Just as there are for humans, there is now a dizzying array of low fat pet foods available and I’m sure many of them work very well if fed correctly and with exercise. However, knowing how much to feed and of what can be very confusing, even for us, this is why we often only recommend one of a few types of food. This is not necessarily because they are any better but because we have experience of using them and we know that they work.

* Burns: A range of hypo-allergenic, organic food. The whole range is fairly low in fat and if fed to your dog’s weight they seem to lose weight as they are low fat but filling. They also make a specific diet food which if fed to the target weight is very effective.
* Hills: make many specific diets for veterinary conditions and have just introduced a ‘Metabolic’ food to their range. This is designed to be fed for a short period time to start the weight loss and then changed back to a normal low fat diet.