



# Make a New Year's Resolution to Lose Weight - For Your Dog

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With Millions of U.S. Dogs Overweight or Obese, and Most Owners Unaware of the Problem, Veterinarians Lend Helping Hand With First-Ever National Canine Weight Check This February

(BUSINESS WIRE)--As millions of Americans vow to get healthier and stave off illness by making a New Year's resolution to lose weight, it's time for dog owners to make a similar pledge for their furry friends.

Recent studies indicate that 25 to 40 percent of U.S. dogs - approximately 17 million - are overweight or obese and potentially facing serious health problems. What's more troubling is that many owners may not be aware if their own dogs are at risk. To help owners determine whether their own dog is at its ideal weight and understand the health implications of canine obesity, thousands of veterinarians across the country have teamed up to participate in the first-ever National Canine Weight Check.

During the month of February, pet owners are invited to bring their dogs to participating veterinary practices for free weight assessments, including breed-specific information. The month-long health initiative will also help raise awareness of the serious medical issues associated with overweight and obesity in dogs including heart disease, arthritis, skin conditions and breathing problems. Additionally, obesity can worsen the signs associated with pre-existing diseases such as high blood pressure, hormone disorders and joint disease.

National Canine Weight Check

Dog owners can log on to [www.StopCanineObesity.com](http://www.StopCanineObesity.com) to find a local veterinarian participating in the National Canine Weight Check and find out the specific dates and times that free weight checks are being offered.

The National Canine Weight Check is a public service supported by the American Kennel Club Humane Fund and veterinarians across the country, through a sponsorship by Pfizer Animal Health. "People make New Year's resolutions for themselves in January. We're asking dog owners to make February the month they concentrate on their dogs' health by getting free weight checks," said Lisa Peterson with the American Kennel Club Humane Fund. "By helping dog owners identify the healthy weight for their individual dog, we are hoping to lessen the prevalence of the serious medical conditions associated with overweight or obesity."

Canine obesity is a growing problem. In 2006, two surveys of U.S. veterinarians and dog owners revealed that many dog owners may not be aware if their dogs are the proper weight. The surveys showed that while veterinarians estimate 47 percent of their canine patients are overweight or obese, only 17 percent of dog owners saw their overweight dogs as unhealthy or obese. While some dog owners realize canine obesity is a serious condition, many may have trouble recognizing that their own pet is at an unhealthy weight. Ten extra pounds on a person may not seem to be that much, but a 40-pound dog with 10 additional pounds is 25 percent over its ideal weight.

"What we've found in talking with dog owners is that it's difficult for them to see the reality that their own pet may be overweight or obese, instead of just chubby or fluffy," said the AKC's Peterson. "That's the point of the National Canine Weight Check - to provide free screenings on an individual basis to help America's dogs."

#### About the American Kennel Club Humane Fund

The AKC Humane Fund's mission is to unite a broad spectrum of animal lovers in promoting the joy and value of responsible and productive pet ownership through education, outreach and grant-making.

#### About Pfizer Animal Health

Pfizer Animal Health is dedicated to improving the safety, quality, and productivity of the world's food supply by enhancing the health of livestock and poultry; and in helping companion animals live longer, healthier lives.

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for Pfizer Animal Health Laura Crovo, 410-902-5058 [lcrovo@mghus.com](mailto:lcrovo@mghus.com) or Pfizer Animal Health Rick Goulart, 212-733-7457 [rick.goulart@pfizer.com](mailto:rick.goulart@pfizer.com)