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## **Animal Welfare Association Shares Guidelines to Combat Rising Cases of Pet Obesity**

October 13 is National Pet Obesity Awareness Day

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Voorhees, NJ – According to the [Association for Pet Obesity Prevention](#), more than half of all cats and dogs – over 100 million pets – in the United States were overweight or obese in 2018. In an effort to combat the rising number of overweight pets, Animal Welfare Association (AWA) offers guidelines on how to help obese animals lose weight.

“Excess fat negatively impacts a pet’s health and longevity,” says AWA Executive Director Maya Richmond. “An obese cat or dog is at risk for serious health conditions and obesity can decrease their life expectancy by two years.”

Domestic animals are considered overweight when they weigh 10% to 20% over their ideal bodyweight. Once a pet’s weight is 20% over the ideal number they are considered obese. Obesity can increase a pet’s risk for health issues like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis and urinary bladder stones.

If your pet is overweight or obese, your veterinarian can help create a plan for healthy weight-loss. Simply reducing your pet’s volume of food can result in malnourishment over time and should be avoided. Your veterinarian can recommend a scientifically formulated nutritional product designed for weight reduction instead. With your veterinarian’s approval, supplement their recommendation with consistent portions, meal frequency and snacks like green beans, broccoli, cauliflower and air-popped popcorn.

Weighing your pet every two to three weeks is important for measuring success and holding yourself accountable. Once your pet reaches its goal, your vet can help determine an appropriate food and portion size for weight maintenance. Portion control will become an essential factor in preventing weight regain.

For more information on pet obesity awareness, visit the Pet Care Resources at <https://www.awanj.org/>.

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**Animal Welfare Association**, a private, non-profit, 501(c)3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the wellbeing of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education. AWA is South Jersey’s leader in progressive companion animal care.

