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**NORTH QUEENSLAND SPECIALIST EQUINE SERVICE**

# FREE WEIGHT LOSS CLINIC !!!



Obesity is the most common nutritional disorder seen in cats and dogs. The most recent figures reported in Australia claim 41% of dogs and 32% of cats are considered to be obese. On average an overweight pet will live 2-5 years less than a pet with an ideal body weight. Health problems appear when body fat exceeds 15% above ideal body weight.

Overweight pets struggle in the Townsville heat, and are at greater risk of heart disease, respiratory problems, skin disease and arthritis. Not only are many of these conditions costly to treat and manage, but they lower the life expectancy of your pet and will make them miserable for the time they have left.

Come and see Townsville Vet Clinic today to have your pet strutting their stuff and looking good in a bikini for next summer!

1. Do you have difficulty feeling your pet's ribs?
2. Is there little or no 'waist'?
3. Do you give your pet table scraps or leftovers?
4. Is your pet reluctant to exercise?
5. Does your pet seem to tire easily with activity?
6. Does your pet waddle when it walks?
7. Does your pet keep eating so long as there is food in the bowl?
8. Have you been told your pet is overweight?

A yes to more than one of these questions may mean your pet's diet and exercise program needs to be revised!

**My pet is overweight – what can I do?**

You're not the first owner with an overweight or obese pet, and it is possible to return your pet to healthy weight. Your TVC Vet can help you develop a personalised, structured Weight Loss Plan, and Exercise Plan which can be tailored to your lifestyle to help get your pet back to their best self.

Creating a Weight Loss Plan will assist you to help your pet achieve a steady rate of weight loss, while keeping them comfortable and happy and help you understand what you can do to help your pet.

In order to determine how many calories you should be feeding your pet, your veterinarian may start by getting a complete list of your pet's daily diet including those sneaky treats you like to give them! This will allow your veterinarian to determine how many calories your pet is ingesting, and help them create a diet suited to your pet's individual needs.

It may take a few tries to find a diet plan that results in the desired 2% of body weight loss per week – at times, your pet may even gain some weight. A Regular weigh in can also track your pet's progress through free fortnightly weigh in consultations. As your pet progresses towards their target weight, their diet and exercise plan will be reassessed to suit their changing needs. Throughout the program, your pet's weight clinic nurse will be available to discuss any queries that you may have.



**What a treat for your dog is equal to in human snacks**

Dog Treat =	Human Equivalent
1 x small plain biscuit =	1 x hamburger
1 x slice buttered toast =	1 x hamburger
30gm cheddar cheese =	75gm chocolate
100gm sausage =	6 donuts

**Can I still give my pet treats?**

Yes, of course! Treats can form an important part of your pet's lifestyle, acting as positive feedback in training and making them feel like part of the family. Much like a human diet, treats are okay in moderation! However, when treats are given, they need to be included in the dietary plan – treats still contain calories!

**Exercise**

Don't worry – you don't need to take up running, there are plenty of other ways to help exercise your pets!

For dogs, fetching and catching games are a good way to get them moving. You can also start walking them, slowing increasing the distance to help build fitness – as an added advantage, this can be good for your health as well!

Cats can be a bit more contrary! If they want to walk on a lead, that is a good place to start. Otherwise, hunting and stalking games with laser pointers, feathers and other toys can help to increase their activity levels.

Our **FREE** weight loss clinic is a service, designed to provide you with a structured program of diet and exercise to help you achieve your furry friend's weight loss goal. You will receive a personalised plan tailored to suit you and your pet's lifestyle. As your pet progresses they will be tracked with weigh in consultations and the program will be adjusted to suit their changing needs.

**CONTACT EMAIL: [vet@townsvillevetclinic.com.au](mailto:vet@townsvillevetclinic.com.au)**

**TRADING HOURS:**

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm  
 Saturday 8.00am to 4.00pm





### ***SOMETIMES LESS IS MORE!***

This is Sporty, the best loved pony in the whole world. She is kind, well behaved and beautiful but her owner Arden had one little concern. Sporty seemed to be expanding! Eating was her favourite thing, after taking Arden riding, and she was very good at it.



Unfortunately for a pony, eating too much, especially green grass, and being overweight can cause laminitis, a condition that was making Sporty's feet sore and meant she couldn't take Arden riding. Sporty and Arden were in luck though.

Arden's Grandma, who was very clever, knew there was something wrong and took Sporty to the Vet. They took x-rays of Sporty's feet and fitted foam pads which made her more comfortable.

She was also tested for Equine Cushings Syndrome (ECS), which is reasonably common, even in well preserved middle aged ponies, and can result in episodes of laminitis. The results showed Sporty did have ECS. Fortunately this can be treated with a special drug called pergolide. It doesn't directly treat the laminitis, however controlling the ECS helps to reduce the likelihood of further episodes.

Arden, her mum and especially her Grandma worked very hard to make sure Sporty had a comfy stall to rest in, and a strict, tasty diet of grass hay and pellets.

After all her special care Sporty is even more **SPORTY**, and she and Arden can go riding again. Well done Sporty!!



### **Know Your Vet**

#### **Dr. Tony Phillis**

Tony graduated from James Cook University in 2015, and shares his time between the small animal clinic and the equine hospital. Tony spent many years in various industries before finally following his passion to become a veterinarian, and joined the team immediately after graduating.

Tony has an active interest in all aspects of veterinary science in particular small animal orthopaedic surgery, weight and pain management in the elderly patient and emergency and critical care just to name a few.

In his spare time Tony can be found walking his Afghan Hounds, fishing on the Great Barrier Reef or travelling with his family.

### ***Dietary Management of The Plump Pony – Dr Tony Phillis***

Equine metabolic syndrome or **EMS** as it's often referred to in ponies as similar to type II diabetes in humans, and results from a number of factors including disorders of glucose metabolism and insulin resistance (IR). Ponies affected by EMS are often overweight, have a cresty neck and may be referred to as "good doers". Some individuals will have a history of intermittent signs of laminitis. Planning diets for ponies with EMS depends on the degree of insulin resistance and how obese the animal appears. Most, but not all, ponies with EMS are obese, the ones that are not, also require specific dietary management.

The main determining factor in EMS is the dietary intake of non-structural carbohydrates or **NSC**, which are the sugars found in leafy plant material. NSC level varies in food stuffs, with dry hays being low and green pasture grass or concentrate feeds containing high grain content having high concentrations of NSC.

The obese pony – Successful management of EMS involves three approaches;

1. Reducing the sugar and starch content of feedstuffs - Times when NSC levels are at their highest include, sunny days, during periods of rapid growth after rain, (e.g. in October and November in North QLD), and when grass is stressed due to drought or over grazing. Particular care must be encouraged during these periods. To reduce the risk of excess insulin in the blood and laminitis, grazing should be restricted to 10% or less daily dietary intake. A simple strategy for reducing NSC in hay is to soak the hay in water for a minimum of 1 hour and wring out the hay, prior to feeding. Combine a low-calorie low-intake source of nutrition with the hay, a balancer pellet or vitamin and mineral supplement is a good choice. The inclusion of an antioxidant is recommended to offset the oxidative stress associated with obesity.
2. Limiting or eliminating access to rapidly growing green grass – restrict access to pasture completely or to less than 1 hour a day, preferably in a small paddock or round yard until insulin sensitivity has improved. This is particularly important for individuals with a history of laminitis as increased NSC consumption can exacerbate laminitis in susceptible ponies. The addition of a grazing muzzle during this period will help reduce grass consumption.
3. Increasing daily exercise – can contribute to weight loss and the reduction of the insulin response after feeding. 20-30 minutes of light to moderate exercise (e.g. lunging walk and trot) daily.

Ponies that are not obese – These ponies need energy for work and to maintain body condition. The aim is to provide adequate energy while limiting the glucose and insulin response after feeding. Examples of feeds containing a moderate amount of NSC (~20%) include lucerne hay and chaff, soaked soy husks, soaked beet pulp and stabilised rice bran. These can be combined with a low energy feed (e.g. old timer, gumnuts) plus grazing, as a complete diet. Small feeds 3-4 times a day or obstacles in the feed bin to help slow feed intake are useful management strategies to help reduce the insulin response to feeding.

In a nutshell, dietary management of metabolic syndrome horses and ponies requires feeding of a low carbohydrate low energy diet and controlling access to green rapidly growing grass. Each case is different and discussing the diet with your Veterinarian will help with selecting the right diet for your horse.

Careful feeding to control body weight, limiting access to grain and high carbohydrate feeds and regular exercise will see you on the way to a healthier pony.