



**West Chelsea Veterinary**

## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Fat Pets Cost Americans Millions in Veterinary Bills Every Year** *Pet Obesity Can Shorten Lives While Emptying Wallets*

**New York, NY** – It's no secret America's in a fight against fat. But, these days, humans aren't the only Americans being affected by our obesity epidemic--our pets' waistlines are bulging too. In fact, approximately 40% of our nation's dogs and cats are overweight or obese, according to a study by the *American Journal of Veterinary Research*. Being heavy isn't cheap either. Research shows **Americans shelled out tens of millions of dollars last year in obesity-related veterinary costs alone.**



“Obesity is, by far, the most common health issue we see as general veterinarians,” says Michael Farber, DVM, of West Chelsea Veterinary in Manhattan. “Ironically, the serious and costly diseases associated with being overweight are also the most preventable.” **Year after year, pet obesity remains a leading cause of preventable disease and death in dogs and cats.**

#### **High Risk, Soaring Costs**

“Some pet parents might not see a problem with their pet's extra pound or two,” Farber points out, “but in an down economy like this one, pet owners will likely take issue with paying higher veterinary bills and that's what having an overweight pet often leads to.” **A few extra pounds on a dog or cat can be comparable to a human living with 30 to 50 extra pounds.**

When a pet is overweight, their whole body has to work harder to support those extra pounds.

From diabetes to arthritis, disc disease, cruciate ligament rupture, hypertension, and even asthma, studies show the risks of being a fat pet are very high. “The vet bills associated with these conditions can be sky high,” says Farber. “Any one of these diseases could require costly treatment and some can evolve into chronic and even incurable conditions.”

Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) recently reported it reimbursed more than \$14 million last year for

claims with direct links to pet obesity. Sure enough, some of the most common claims included illnesses such as diabetes and joint and back issues.

### **FAT FACTS**

- **Up to 60 percent of American adults are overweight or obese**
- **7.2 million dogs are estimated to be obese and 26 million overweight. The number in cats is higher, with 15.7 million estimated to be obese and 35 million overweight in the U.S.**
- **Smaller pets can tip the scales with only two to three pounds of extra weight**
- **52.1% of dogs and 55% of cats over age seven were found to be overweight or obese**

*Sources: Journal of the American Medical Association, Journal of Nutrition*

### **Why Cutting Corners May Actually Add Fat**

“In a down economy like ours, pet owners are often tempted to switch to cheaper pet food brands in order to cut corners,” explains Farber. “The problem is, cheaper foods are often made to taste extra flavorful by adding calories and unhealthy byproducts, which can fatten pets up. Making sure a pet eats quality food, in the proper amounts, can literally add years to their life and save precious dollars in the long run.”

### **What you can do?**

To help your pets stay at a healthy weight and live a longer life, Dr. Farber gives these tips:

- **Control portions.** “Feed your pets according to their body weight and age. Your vet can help you determine the best amount and type of food your pet should be eating.”
- **Go for a walk.** “Just keep in mind that increasing your pet's activity gradually is a good idea if they aren't accustomed to heavy exercise.”
- **Make exercise fun.** “Cats love hunting, so hiding treats around their environment puts their skills to work, while giving them a workout.”
- **Visit Your Vet.** “Regular vet visits are the single most effective way to keep a close tab on your pet's health. The earlier you catch a weight-related issue, the less life threatening and costly it could become.”
- **Diet Responsibly.** “Diet carefully with guidance from your vet. Losing too much weight too quickly can be dangerous to your pets, especially your cat.”

**Media Opportunities: Dr. Michael Farber, DVM, of West Chelsea Veterinary in Manhattan, is available for interview. Media inquiries, please contact Julie Robbins (646) 981-3342 / [Julie@FetchingCommunications.com](mailto:Julie@FetchingCommunications.com)**

### ***About West Chelsea Veterinary***

*West Chelsea Veterinary was founded in 1997. Our exceptional health care team provides the highest quality of care to our patients and those that love them. We take great pride in our state-of-the-art facility and our commitment to practicing cutting edge medicine and diagnostics. We are dedicated to giving our clients the guidance they need to make informed decisions with regard to their pet's health. At West Chelsea Veterinary, we consider each pet to be special and unique, and we will treat your*

*treasured companion with the same caliber of care as we would demand for our own.*