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**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**The Pudgy Pooch**

**By Mike Mathews**

Fat dogs are likely to end up with serious dog health problems. Ask yourself these three questions.

Is your dog starting to look a little overweight? Is it difficult to feel your dog's ribs? Has your dog gained a few extra pounds in the last year? If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions then maybe it is time to start thinking about a weight control program for your dog.

A pound or two weight gain for a small dog is equivalent to 15 or 20 pounds for an adult person. Overweight or fat dogs are at serious risk for developing or aggravating a wide-range of health problems. These dog health problems include: musculoskeletal disorders including hip and elbow dysplasia, arthritis, spinal disc problems and joint and ligament ruptures; heart, kidney and liver diseases; diabetes; breathing and respiratory problems; increased intolerance to heat and exercise; poor coat and skin disease; and increased surgical and anesthetic risk. Excess weight can reduce the life expectancy of your dog by as much as 20%.

The fat dog or pudgy pooch weight control program is really based on a very simple equation. In order for your dog to lose weight, you must reduce the number of calories he eats while increasing the number of calories he burns through increased activity. As one popular truism states – "If your dog is too fat, you aren't getting enough exercise". As you begin to develop your dog's weight control program, you should make a list of the reasons that probably contributed to your dog's excess weight. These reasons might include: too little exercise; feeding your dog too much dog food; feeding your dog table scraps and leftovers; and giving your dog food and treats as rewards for good behavior. Some dog breeds such as the American and English Cocker Spaniels seem to process their food efficiently and are subject to weight gain. You must watch their food intake carefully.

The first step in your weight control program is to visit your veterinarian and have him or her weigh your dog and set a healthy target weight. Ask your vet to do a blood test to rule out metabolic disorders such as hypothyroidism which may be contributing to weight gain and which can be readily treated. Then, in conjunction with your vet, decide on which dog food approach to use. You can either reduce the intake calories by cutting back on your existing dog food by 25% or you can switch to a reduced calorie dog food . If you switch to a calorie reduced dog food, then make sure you buy a high quality dog food that doesn't have too much ash and will provide good nutrition for your dog. Ask your vet

whether it would be beneficial to add a vitamin/mineral/fatty acid supplement to your dog's diet.

Next ask your vet to make sure your dog is healthy enough to tolerate an increased amount of exercise and activity. There are a number of activities that you and your dog can participate in that will result in burning up more calories. Other ways to burn calories are by simply increasing the frequency of exercise and play sessions or by increasing the duration of the exercise period. In other words – more walks or longer walks. Remember to keep monitoring your dog's food intake. Don't let other family members reward him with dog treats – buy your dog chewy toys instead!

Finally you need to monitor the progress of your weight control program by weighing your dog every two weeks on a regular basis. Before long you will be enjoying the benefits of a healthier, happier and more active companion.

Mike Mathews is a contributing writer and editor for the popular dog breed site:

<http://www.dog-breed-facts.com>

. He provides informative, real-world advice and tips on dog breeds,

dog health, dog grooming and more. As well be sure to check out his free report on Dog Training.

### **Who is the Gourmet? You or Your Dog?**

**By Renée Alexandria**

#### **Who is the Gourmet? You or Your Dog? by Renée Alexandria**

Thinking of cooking up a storm for your pooch? And that I assume you're having difficulties in convincing your pooch eating his premium dog food.

There are two issues here—Home-cooked meals verses commercial premium dog food.

Whether or not one is better than the other is a matter of preference—you not your dog. And whether or not your dog becomes a demanding "gourmet" is also depending on you; not your dog.

In choosing varied "gourmet" diets for our dogs (diets which are quickly becoming expensive), we fall into an anthropomorphic fallacy—a tendency where human characteristics for animals.

Dogs and all animals are creatures of habit. A pup raised on an ordinary feed (even he's strictly on commercially packed food) will grow to like it, sometimes shunning rarer delicacies in favor of "the usual."

Occasionally, your pooch may clamor for your steak while his own kibbles waits in his bowl, he'll eventually go for his regular meal if other temptations don't compete. Variety is not as crucial to him as

## The Pudgy Pooch

it may seem to you.

Dogs are not finicky eaters by nature. We inadvertently create this problem by substituting food for love. We think that every time our dog does something cute, we should give him a treat. After a while, our dog wants nothing but treats, especially if they come from our plate or the refrigerator!

If you feed your dog a variety of food in hopes that one will appeal to him, he will demand a greater and greater variety, and you will have created a finicky eater! Choose a high-quality food and stick to it. Do not feed table scraps or give in-between meal snacks to your dog.

Some "gourmet" dog foods (and especially dog "treats") are designed to appeal more to the human purchaser than the animal consumer. Color-blind canines are indifferent to the pastel hues that beckon the buyer of dog candies. We pay extra for such gimmicks because we consciously or unconsciously equate human tastes and needs with those of our pooches.

What matter most to them is the taste, not the shape, size or colour. Dogs don't know a clue about calories that gamey treat can add to their waistline. So is up to us to be the sensible one to give treats in moderation. If possible, limit it to training and party times.

Dogs become finicky when they are given too great a variety and by overfeeding. I'm not surprise that at this stage, they may already have weight and health issues to add to their existing dilemma.

If you do change foods, do it gradually by adding a bit of new food each day to the old food. The reason for this is that the digestive flora gets used to one food and a rapid change can cause diarrhea and digestive upsets.

If you choose a high quality food, there is really no need for vitamin supplementation. You will pay more for premium dog food, but you will use less because a small feeding amount has more nutrients and is more thoroughly digested.

And if you should decide on home cooked meals instead, just remember that you should depart from a "complete and balanced" pet diet in favor of a more specialized program. These reasons may include age, disease, or even stress.

A good rule of thumb to apply to your dog's diet system is "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And with this notion, your pooch will soon know you are truly the Gourmet—The Boss.

Renée Alexandra—a former professional show-dog handler, breeder and volunteer at animal shelters. She has written numerous articles from dog behavioural problems to dog party themes. Get a Free copy of her "21 ways of Budgeting Tips & Thrifty Ideas" ebook at <http://www.small-dogs-breed-lovers.com> Spend Less and Pamper More.



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