



Weight Management

Managing the Overweight Dog

Most dogs will naturally lose excess weight after switching from a carbohydrate-based dry food to a natural raw food diet. There are a number of factors to consider, but the primary reason is that raw food does not contain sugars or carbohydrates that contribute to higher blood sugar levels and weight gain.

If your dog has to lose more than 10% of the overall body weight to reach their ideal weight, we suggest reducing the portion size of your dog's raw meals and selecting lower fat and higher fiber raw meals to achieve weight loss more quickly.

Suggested food portions based on ideal body weight are as follows:

Weight Loss – 1.5%

Maintenance and Less Active Adult Dogs – 2%

Moderately Active Dogs & Puppies – 2.5%

Very Active Dogs or Weight Gain – 3%

(eg. a 100 lb dog at 2% maintenance would eat 2 lbs of raw per day).

You can also determine your dog's actual caloric needs, known as the **Resting Energy Requirement**, to determine just how many calories your pet requires, and then adjusting their calorie intake to achieve weight loss.

Formula:

Daily Caloric Intake = $30 \times (\text{weight in kg}) + 70$

Big Country Raw lists calories per 100 grams on our website and all our packaging. The lower calorie meals are poultry meats, and higher calorie meals are typically red meats like beef, pork and lamb. We also recommend looking at the fat percentage when making meal choices.



Managing Weight Through Diet

Low Fat Options - perfect for weight loss, and should make up the bulk of the diet:

Pure Rabbit
Duck Dinner

Pure Buffalo
Pure Kangaroo

Fish Dinner

Moderate Options – To be fed occasionally

Chicken Dinner
Turkey Dinner

Breeder Blend
Game Bird Blend

Country Blend

Higher Fat Items – to be fed very rarely or not at all until desired weight is reached:

Beef Dinner
Lamb Dinner

Pork Dinner
Turkey Salmon Lamb Blend

Tips and Suggestions for Successful Weight Loss

- Big Country Raw Dinner formulas contain 10% fruit and vegetables. We would recommend adding up to 20% fruit and vegetable to the diet to add more fibre and less calories per meal. You can use the Fruit and Vegetable Blend or SuperFood Blend, or simply make your own. We suggest adding a maximum $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit and veggie puree per 1 lb of raw.
- Offer skinless raw meaty bones such as turkey necks, chicken necks and duck necks in addition to the raw meals to help reduce fat. Skinless necks contain approximately 3% fat compared to Chicken or Turkey Dinner, which contain 12% to 14% fat. Leaner, lower calorie meaty bone choices like Flat Rib Bones or Elk Neck Bones contain little fat and more meat and sinews, providing an excellent method of curbing appetite. A meaty bone gives your dog time to chew and enjoy the taste without all the extra calories.
- Treat your dog with low calorie dehydrated treats like beef liver, lamb liver or beef lung. Avoid higher calorie treats like chicken feet, duck feet or duck wing.



There are many factors to consider when managing your pet's weight. Diet and limiting caloric intake is only one part of the puzzle. Other factors include:

1. Exercise - increasing activity levels for a period of 1-2 months will encourage weight loss. Just 30 extra minutes of daily walking or off leash play will aid in weight loss.
2. Health - dogs with hypothyroidism or Cushing's Disease are predisposed to weight gain. If diet and exercise does not achieve a healthy weight, perhaps a visit to your vet for a check-up is in order.

Managing the Underweight or Extremely Active Dog

Most dogs achieve and easily maintain a perfect weight on a raw diet. However, on occasion, pet owners say their dog seems hungry or is losing weight on the raw diet. Ideally, you should be able to see and feel your dog's ribs, but NOT count them!

The first recommendation to encourage weight gain is to consider food portions. Feeding calculators are based on average ideal body weight percentages. Occasionally, we see dogs that require more food to maintain weight than a dog of the same or smaller size. Activity level, age, breed, and metabolism are all factors that contribute to how your dog metabolizes their calories, which then dictates their food needs.

We recommend feeding 2.0% of your dog's body weight in raw food if your dog is moderately active (meaning 30 – 60 minutes of leashed activity per day). If your dog is more active and playing off leash for at least 30 minutes per day we suggest 2.5% of your dog's ideal weight in raw per day. For highly active breeds or puppies we suggest 3% – 3.5%.

The best choices for weight gain are:

Beef Dinner
Lamb Dinner
Pork Dinner

Breeder Blend
Chicken Dinner
Turkey Dinner

Turkey Salmon Lamb
Country Blend

Tips and Suggestions for Successful Weight Gain

- Include a probiotic or digestive enzyme with each meal for a period of 30 days. Probiotics and digestive enzymes help maximize the absorption of the food, ensuring maximum nutritional benefit. We recommend Omega Alpha Probiotic 8 Plus or the Best in Show Digestive Enzyme.
- Offer raw meaty bones like Beef Meaty Bones that contain meat and fat for extra calories. Marrow Bones are also higher in fat, and they are an enjoyable treat for your dog.
- Add a raw egg to your dog's meals. Eggs offer many nutritional benefits and increase caloric intake.
- Add some dairy - cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, or kefir should not exceed 10% of your dog's meals. Most dogs enjoy these added treats, and they are excellent ways to increase food portions.
- Treat your dog with higher calorie dehydrated treats like chicken feet, duck feet or duck wings

There are many factors to consider when managing your pet's weight. Diet and increasing caloric intake is only one part of the puzzle. A visit to your vet to rule out possible parasites or other health conditions (eg. cancer) could be necessary if your pet continues to lose weight.