

# Health Risks For Overweight Cats

As in people, cats carrying extra pounds of weight place extra demands on virtually all the organs of their bodies. When we overload these organs disease and sometimes death are the consequences. The health risks to overweight cats are serious and every cat owner should be aware of them.

## Diabetes

One of the most common complications of obesity in cats is the development of Diabetes. According to one study, heavy or obese cats are 2-4 times more likely to develop Diabetes.

## Liver Disease

The liver stores fat so when a cat is overweight, an increased amount of fat builds up in the liver. This condition can result in decreased liver function. It can be life-threatening if an obese cat, for any reason, does not eat, loses weight rapidly, or is otherwise stressed.

## Lameness/Arthritis

The risk of lameness and arthritis in heavy or obese cats is 3-5 times that of cats with optimal weight. Possible reasons for this include the increased force on joints the extra weight may cause, such as when the cat jumps down from high places. Other studies suggest overweight cats may actually produce abnormal cartilage.

## Skin Problems

Obese cats are twice as likely to develop nonallergic skin conditions when compared to cats of optimal weight. Dry, flaky skin and feline acne were the two most common conditions observed in one study. Obese cats often have an inability to groom themselves adequately and this may result in skin problems as well.

## Increased Surgical/Anesthetic Risk

Many of the anesthetics are taken up by fat, so an overweight animal will take longer to come out of anesthesia because the anesthetic must be removed from the fat by the body. In addition, many anesthetics are broken down by the liver. A fatty liver may not be as efficient at breaking down anesthetics and other drugs, so again, recovery may be delayed.

## Decreased Quality/Length of Life

It is evident from the above discussion that the health, ability to groom, and even to move, are diminished in overweight cats. Overweight cats may become more irritable due to being in pain or simply being uncomfortable.