



Making a Diet Recommendation

COMPONENTS OF NUTRITIONAL ASSESSMENT

Nutrition is one of the most important contributors to health. It can help pets live long, healthy lives and can help reduce risk for some health conditions. Nutritional assessments, performed as often as needed, can help ensure pets receive appropriate nutrition.



Key Messages

- A pet's nutritional status is determined by three interrelated factors: the pet, the diet and feeding management. These factors can change over time, making reevaluation of each variable necessary.
- Animal-specific factors include the species, age, lifestyle and health of the pet. A thorough physical examination and nutritional assessment are key to determining the pet's nutritional status and to identifying the risk or presence of diet-sensitive health conditions.
- Diet-specific factors address the nutritional content of the food relative to the pet's needs. A complete diet history and evaluation of the current foods' nutritional content can help identify any significant imbalances in the pet's diet.
- Feeding management factors include the amount, frequency, timing, location and method of feeding the pet, while environmental factors include space and type of surroundings (e.g., competitive eating or lack of appropriate environmental stimulation).
- Pets, foods, feeding practices and environmental factors can change for many reasons. Reevaluation, performed as often as needed, helps ensure pets are receiving appropriate nutrition.

Additional Resources

Eirmann, L. (2016). Nutritional assessment. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 46(5), 855–867. doi: 10.1016/j.cvsm.2016.04.012

Laflamme, D. P. (2020). Understanding the nutritional needs of healthy cats and those with diet-sensitive conditions. *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, 50(5), 905–924. doi: 10.1016/j.cvsm.2020.05.001

WSAVA Nutritional Assessment Guidelines Task Force Members, Freeman, L., Becvarova, I., Cave, N., MacKay, C., Nguyen, P., Rama, B., Takashima, G., Tiffin, R., Tsjimoto, H., & van Beukelen, P. (2011). WSAVA nutritional assessment guidelines. *Journal of Small Animal Practice*, 52(7), 385–396. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-5827.2011.01079.x

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.