



# PAW prints

Volume 5

No. 6

## 'Tis the Season...

Ah, Christmas!...New Years!...Parties! Who among us isn't concerned about gaining 'just a little' weight during the holiday season. Let's take a look at our pet's diet as well.

### First, obesity

How do you know if your pooch is at his perfect weight? Here are some simple guidelines to help you determine if Rovers diet needs adjusting.

Take an unbiased look at him from the back and from above to get a general picture (plump? lean?). Then put your hands over his ribcage and determine if ribs are prominent or fairly padded. Also check the base of his tail and abdomen.

- **Very thin.** Ribs are easy to feel with no fat cover. Base of tail is a prominent raised bony structure with no fat under skin. The abdomen shows a prominent hourglass shape with severe abdominal tuck.
- **Underweight.** The ribs are easy to feel with little fat cover. The tail is a raised bony structure with little fat under skin. The abdomen shows a tuck, with a marked hourglass shape.
- **Ideal.** You can still feel the ribs, but they have a slight fat cover. The base of tail shows either a smooth contour or some thickening, but it's still possible to feel bony structures under a small layer of fat. The abdomen shows some tuck, with a well-proportioned waist.
- **Overweight.** The ribs are difficult to feel, with moderate fat covering. The base of tail has a smooth contour, possibly some thickening, but you can still feel the bone structure. No abdominal tuck and the back is slightly broadened.
- **Obese.** The ribs are difficult to feel with a thick covering of fat. Base of the tail is thickened and difficult to feel any bone. The abdomen bulges with no waist. The back is obviously broadened.

If Fido is overweight, it could be time to start counting calories! Check with your vet first to make sure there are no underlying medical conditions before putting Rover on a diet.

First, keep a close eye on him to find out where all his food is coming from. Is someone slipping him treats from the table? Is he helping himself to the cat food or rumaging

through the trash? Or is his daily helping just a little too large? Try these tips.

- avoid high-calorie treats, and limit the number
- Give love and affection and extra play-time as rewards instead of snacks
- Exercise (this is good for both of you!)
- Feed on a regular schedule and have one person in charge of feeding
- Make sure there's lots of fresh, clean water available at all times.

Keep an accurate record of Fido's diet and weight loss. Some dogs will lose weight faster than others, so be patient.

### Second, those 'bad' things

Dogs believe that if something fits into their mouth, it must be food, no matter what it tastes like. Unfortunately, they can be wrong. Several 'people foods' can be quite dangerous to dogs and cats.

One of the worst is chocolate. The caffeine and theobromine contained in a single milk chocolate bar can make a small dog very sick. Darker chocolate contains a higher concentration of these compounds, so is even more dangerous. Less than an ounce of baking chocolate can cause death in a small dog.

Onions can cause trouble as well. They contain a large amount of sulphur which can destroy red blood cells in dogs and cause hemolytic anemia. Small dogs are more severely affected by onions than large dogs.

Dogs love garlic, but too much can not only cause bad breath but can also cause problems with red blood cells. Use moderation with garlic.

Careful with that antifreeze. Antifreeze is both sweet smelling and irresistible, and it's also deadly to Rover. If the antidote isn't given within 24 hours, he will probably die. Store antifreeze well out of reach, and periodically check under the car for any leaks.

Christmas decorations can look like toys. Supervise Fido around the tree. Traditional Christmas plants, such as poinsettia and mistletoe can be extremely poisonous, as well as some common houseplants.

Have a happy, healthy holiday season, and may we all **not** be blessed with those extra few pounds come the New Year!

## This month...

- the 'Prez' talks
- Ask Deborah
- your pics!

## Feature product

### Aromask

We have a wonderful new product called Aromask. Environmentally safe and 100% biodegradable, it neutralizes odors without the use of chemicals or toxins. This makes it great for use near pet bedding or in litter boxes because it totally eliminates that nasty odor.

Aromask is also very economical to use because it's highly concentrated. There are several sizes to choose from, including a spray pump and a gel pack. Refill bottles are also available.

Cat owners, make this part of your next purchase.

## How old is your dog?

We've always been told that one year of a dog's life is equal to seven of our years. Veterinarians now follow a more realistic comparison.

Dog	Person
5 months	10 years
8 months	13 years
10 months	14 years
12 months	15 years
18 months	20 years
2 years	24 years

From here, the scale goes up by four dog years for every human years. A three year old dog would be 28 years old, a four year old dog would be 32 years old, etc. So how old is your dog?

## Photo contest



### ...and the winner is...

Paolo, awaiting her bath. She's a Husky/Collie/Akita cross and (obviously) loves to dig and chase birds and gophers. submitted by proud parents Brian and Cindy Sanders

## From the Prez



Wow, another year has come and gone. A new millennium is just around the corner. We are on the way to a record year. We have to thank you, our valued customers, for this ongoing success.

A great many of our new customers have been referred to us by existing customers. It is always gratifying to have so many happy customers. We appreciate your confidence in Pets First and promise that we will continue to strive for excellence in the future. Make sure any new customers you refer to us mention your name so that we can credit the Pet Point referral bonus properly.

As we continue our steady growth, we continue to look for motivated individuals that need a little extra cash. We have a wonderful part-time business opportunity for anyone wanting to take up the challenge. We need new Independent Contractors and Pet Professionals to spread the word about Pets First. If you are interested please give us a call or send us an e-mail.

I am a grandfather! My daughter Halo gave birth to ten healthy puppies. Mom and babes are doing fine. I was quite curious during labor and poked my head into the whelping room on several occasions. I even went up and sniffed a couple, thought the girls were neat but don't like the thought of having extra boys in our house.

Hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a great start to the new millennium.

## Contact us

"Paw Prints" is published every two months by Pets First Products and Services Inc. Your comments, submissions and suggestions are very welcome. Contact us at:

Pets First, #106 – 12824 78th Avenue  
Surrey, B.C., Canada V3W 8E7

Tel: 604 590-7387 or  
1-800-PETS-1ST

Fax: 604 590-5578

email: [pets1st@pro.net](mailto:pets1st@pro.net)

Visit our web site: [www.pets1st.com](http://www.pets1st.com)

Contact our editor if you have any suggestions for the newsletter. You can reach her via email at: [pets1\\_editor@yahoo.com](mailto:pets1_editor@yahoo.com) or drop her a note at the above address.

### your pet pic here

Send in those pet pictures, and your pet could be featured here!

First prize is 40 lbs of dog food, or 20 lbs of cat food.

*Sorry, no pictures can be returned.*

## Some happy clients



Harley and Ranger posing for their photographer, David Sutherland.



Best friends Cosmo, Milo and Misty love their Pets First...and the comfort of Rod and Alice Hamilton's bed!



Bailey and Willie hiking and sight-seeing near Jasper, BC with Lynne.



Austin Thind shares a 'trick & treat' with pal Cooper.

## Check the net

Our trusty (and busy) editor has been surfing the net again...and here are her picks for this issue.

A free trial version of 'Lineage Manager for Dogs', a database for keeping all your information in one place. Full version is \$50, looks interesting!

[www.nwpsw.com](http://www.nwpsw.com)

Check out the intelligence of different dog breeds. Also at this site is a listing of the best and worst breeds of dogs for security training.

[www.petrix.com/dogint/](http://www.petrix.com/dogint/)

Need to send someone a virtual postcard? Here's a great selection of pet oriented images, and they can even be sent with accompanying music! There is also a wide variety of non-pet oriented cards. <http://browse.postcards.org/postcards/cards/5100/>

## Ask Deborah

*Dear Deborah, I have a question regarding my 5 year old cat. My husband and I are expecting our first child and through the whole pregnancy my cat has become very possessive. Everywhere I go, she follows me. No matter where I sit, regardless if there is room for her, she needs to sit with me. I am a little concerned about what will happen when we bring the baby home. She has never been like this before, and I don't know what to do with the whole situation. Does she know that something is not the same. Is she being jealous or protective? Respectfully, Nancy*

Dear Mama Nancy,

Yes, your cat knows you're pregnant. Pets can smell and sense menstruation, birth, death, seizures, sickness and subtle changes in the mood and health of those they care for.

Pregnancy changes your hormonal balance, your physical size and your emotional wave length. These changes are natural and primitive and exactly what animals are geared up to understand. Your cat would have to be extremely out of touch to miss this life event.

There is no reason to suspect ill will. It sounds like your cat has become your guardian and companion. She may well view herself as your mother and that makes her the granny for your new baby. (If your cat brings you half dead prey she considers you her kitten in need of hunting lessons.)

Cats and dogs tend to cling to people they feel need them. If your cat was jealous she would probably be ignoring you and trying to bond with your husband. The fact that she wants to be with you is a good sign. Your cat's attentiveness will probably manifest itself as devotion and caring to both of you. But, babies should never be left unattended with animals of any kind just to be safe.

Try to acclimatize pets to the new sights, sounds and smells that come with a new baby. Invite family and friends with babies to come visit. Borrow some baby stuff and keep a dirty diaper in the garbage so your cat gets used to the real thing.

Avoid baby talk to your cat and other pets. Instead come up with new signals and nicknames so pets know when you are talking to them and when you are not.

Dogs and cats adjust to new babies faster if there is a corresponding perk or treat that goes along with the new baby. For example baby plus stroller equals more dog walks or baby in high chair equals smoked salmon in cat dish.

Do not let pets share food with baby by cleaning the high chair or trays. There is a fine line between sharing, stealing and begging. Do not go near the litter boxes while you are pregnant and susceptible to sicknesses passed through cat waste. (It is now officially your husband's turn to change the litter box, and you can quote me.)

If you plan a baby shower, send the dog out for the day, or put the cat in her own room so she doesn't have to watch. Avoid direct competition for attention and Kitty and Rover will love baby in no time.

Congratulations to you both  
Deborah Wolfe