



Every pet. Every time.



# AAHA Nutritional Assessment Guidelines for Dogs and Cats

## Implementing the Guidelines is as Easy as 1-2-3

### 1 What do the AAHA Guidelines say?

Incorporate a nutritional assessment and specific dietary recommendation in the physical exam for every pet, every time they visit.

It's as simple as that.



### 3 How do you incorporate the nutritional assessment within the physical exam?

#### Screening Evaluation:

- Nutritional history/activity level
- Body weight
- Body/muscle condition score

#### Normal Physical Exam

No nutritional risk factors identified

Make a specific dietary recommendation

#### Abnormal Physical Exam Findings

or nutritional risk factors identified

#### Extended Evaluation

Make a specific dietary recommendation

### 2 What is included in the nutritional assessment?

**A. For every patient:** do a screening evaluation (nutritional history/activity level, body weight & body/muscle condition score)

**B. For a patient with abnormal physical exam findings or nutritional risk factors:** do an extended evaluation.



\*Nutritional risk factors listed on back

# How to ensure the entire team is working together to implement the *Guidelines*

AAHA Nutritional Assessment Guidelines for Dogs and Cats

"Incorporating a nutritional assessment into the routine examination protocol for every patient is important for maintaining optimal health, as well as the response to disease and injury."

Michael Cavanaugh, DVM, DABVP  
AAHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## How to develop and customize a written protocol that works for your clinic

Make a **TEAM COMMITMENT** to acknowledge nutrition as a vital assessment and follow the AAHA Nutritional Assessment Guidelines for Dogs and Cats because your patients deserve it.

Together, develop a customized **WRITTEN PROTOCOL** to ensure every patient receives a nutritional assessment and specific dietary recommendation at every visit. (See example on right)

Visit **EVERYPETEVERYTIME.COM** or **AAHANET.ORG** to see the full AAHA Guidelines and tips for bringing them to life in your practice.



Example of a protocol from clinics already making nutrition a vital assessment

### CHECK IN

- Client fills out nutrition history/update form
- Weigh in
- Front desk staff** places nutrition history/update form in patient's records

### EXAM ROOM

- Veterinary technician** records history using nutrition history form to help ask questions and initiate discussion
- Veterinarian** performs a physical exam and nutritional assessment
- Veterinarian** makes a specific nutrition recommendation and documents the recommendation in patient's records
- Veterinary technician** fills out travel log, including nutrition recommendation
- Veterinary technician** asks client if there are any questions and reinforces the recommendation
- Veterinary technician** dispenses tools (measuring cups, literature about nutrition, information packet)
- Veterinary technician** sends patient home with an information packet even if they don't purchase recommended food

### CHECK OUT

- Front desk staff** asks client again if there are any questions
- Front desk staff** dispenses food and reinforces recommendation
- Front desk staff** schedules a callback in 2-7 days if recommendation is for a new food
- Front desk staff** enters reminder code for re-purchase of food two weeks before food will run out

### \* Nutritional risk factors:

- Lifestage considerations
- Abnormal BCS or MCS
- Poor skin or hair coat
- Systemic or dental disease
- Snacks, table food > 10% of total calories
- Unconventional diet
- Gastrointestinal upset
- Inadequate or inappropriate housing

