





The *fat cats* *of kathy*

Super-Sized Kitties Melt Their Owner's Hearts

*For Katy cat fanciers,
every feline is special.
But certain owners
have more than the
average kitty to care
for. In fact, some tubby
tabbies tip the scale at
20 pounds or more.*

Diet and nutrition are important
for all cats, but especially for
those that are overweight

Written by Melanie Saxton

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Holy Cow – Meet Calvin

Rescued from a Kroger parking lot, he once fit into the palm of a hand. But after neutering, Calvin wasn't so tiny anymore. "Calvin's weight snuck up on us," says owner Mary Holdsworth. "We love all 23 pounds of him, especially because he's fighting cancer. He has a form of injection-site sarcoma caused by his vaccinations." There's no cure, but Calvin is content and gets lots of attention. "Friends and family say, 'Holy Cow, did you see how big that cat is?'" says Holdsworth. But she just smiles and politely corrects them. "He's not fat, he's just husky."

The Little Manatee

"I adopted Daniel from clients who could no longer care for him," says Stephanie Stukenborg of Fry Road Animal Clinic. "He's a 'fraidy cat. He's also very sweet and sometimes crushes me with 29 pounds of love!" Daniel was obese when he came into Stukenborg's life, and he is currently dieting. "I have him on 1/3 cup of Hill's Prescription Diet daily to help him avoid excess calories," says Stukenborg. People get a laugh out of Daniel's nickname. "I call him my Little Manatee because he's larger than my laptop or microwave!"

Two Survivors

As kittens, Celeste Long's cats had to fight to survive. "Scooter is 18 pounds, and I think he overeats because his mother was a stray and food was scarce. Although he is 17 years old, he never got over it," says Long. Midnight's story is similar. "Midnight was an animal shelter rescue. Previous food deprivation may account for his 20 pounds of chubbiness." Average male cats weigh between 10 to 12 pounds, but luckily Long's cats still get a clean bill of health despite their weight. "They're still playful after all these years," says Long.

Magic, the Maine Coon

Maine Coon owners know that some breeds are just larger than others. "Magic weighs about 25 pounds. His ideal weight is 16 to 17 pounds," says owner Judy Williams. "He's supposed to be dieting, but steals food from the other cats." Magic measures about 39 inches with legs extended front and back (without stretching), but some Maine Coons can measure up to 45 inches. "Unlike many new breeds, Maine Coons have no wild cat in them and are gentle giants bred for good personalities. That's why he's the perfect pet for my daughter, Katie," says Williams.

A Couple of Tubby Tabbies

Bubba and Stripes are favorite borders at Waggin' Tails Pet Ranch. "We don't often see cats this large," says Denise Einkoff, owner, who specializes in nutrition and animal science. "Bubba started at 22 pounds but has lost five with our nutritional counseling. He's a real success story." The kennel's cat room is equipped to keep cats active. "Stripes is 17 pounds and still overweight. But we work with owners and carry high protein Nature's Variety cat food, a recommended product for weight loss."

The Catkin's Diet

According to Dr. Baird of Fulshear Animal Hospital, cats get the same type of obesity-related illnesses as people. "The big concern is Diabetes. It exhausts the pancreas, making cats insulin-dependent." Obese cats may also suffer muscular-skeletal joint, hip, and back pain problems. "A 'Catkin's'-type diet, like Atkins, lowers carbs and increases protein. People



Calvin, 23 pounds, is currently fighting cancer



Magic, a Maine Coon, weighs 25 pounds, although his ideal weight is between 16 and 17 pounds



Bubba has lost five pounds after going through nutrition counseling



Stephanie's cat, Daniel, is larger than her laptop computer and microwave



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Stripes gets diet and nutrition help from Waggin' Tails Pet Ranch



may not realize that diet canned cat foods, more so than dry, offer excellent nutrition and approximate the ingredients of the cat's natural diet – a rat,” explains Baird.

Check-Ups and a Healthy Diet

All cats need annual check-ups, and owners of fat cats need to be particularly vigilant. Fat cats may be cute, but not always healthy.

Veterinarians can recommend medically supervised diets, some requiring a prescription. Wet or dry, diet cat foods can be found online, in pet supply stores, at veterinarian clinics, or at the grocery store. **KM**

MELANIE SAXTON is a Katy editor, HR Manager, and community volunteer. She is also a proud mom to daughter, Emily.

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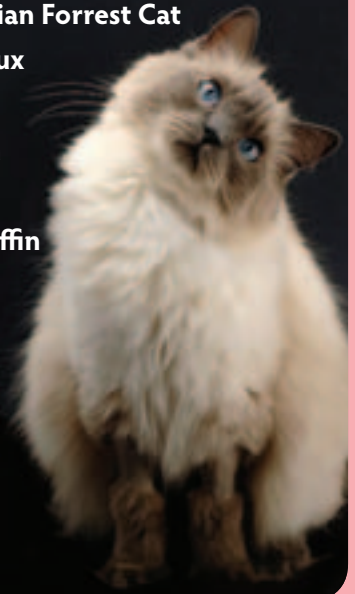
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the list

If you admire large breeds, these domestic felines are among the top of the list.

- Maine Coon
- Norwegian Forrest Cat
- Chartreux
- Persian
- Siberian
- Ragdoll
- Ragamuffin



Male cats typically weigh between 10 and 12 pounds, but some can tip the scales at 20 pounds or more



Photo by Janet Coulden