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## Pearls for the Practitioner

### Topic: Nutrition

*The Animal Medical Center has created this e-mail publication to keep you informed about the latest practices in veterinary medicine and how these practices are being applied at The AMC. If you are interested in obtaining past issues of "Pearls for the Practitioner" or if you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please e-mail [lynne.freeman-gassem@amcny.org](mailto:lynne.freeman-gassem@amcny.org).*

*From the 2008 Purina Nutrition Forum and the  
2008 Atlantic Coast Veterinary Conference*

*Abstracted by Dr. Deirdre Chiaramonte and Dr. Ann Hohenhaus*

The information contained in the article below was gleaned from a recent professional meeting held by Purina at the Atlantic Coast Veterinary Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Because the veterinarians at The AMC and you, our colleague in the veterinary community, understand the importance of nutrition in the lives and health of the pets we treat, we have summarized the key points of the meeting for your information below.

Measurement of serum fructosamine is commonly used to determine if hyperglycemia is related to diabetes or to monitor insulin therapy in cats. If a cat happens to have concurrent, uncontrolled hyperthyroidism, with its associated hypermetabolic state, the fructosamine measurement can be falsely lowered. Owners should be instructed to monitor urine glucose using traditional dipsticks or the glucose detection litter box additive to determine if hyperglycemia is a persistent problem.

Pet owners often equate food with love, so many don't understand the correlation to **obesity and disease**. Overweight and obese dogs are more prone to arthritis and some cancers than those whose weight is appropriate for their age and body type. A recent study has shown that obesity in dogs can result in dyslipidemia (an unhealthy blood lipid profile) due to an increase in plasma triglycerides. Dyslipidemia can cause abdominal pain, ocular troubles

or cardiovascular dysfunctions. Dyslipidemia in cats is currently under investigation.

**The use of human pedometers** is an excellent way to measure activity in beagle-sized or larger dogs. Dogs who are active (more than 7,500 steps per day, as measured by a collar mounted pedometer) can eat more without gaining weight when compared to inactive dogs. Use of a pedometer is an important and cost effective device for dog owners to monitor their dog's exercise level during a weight loss program.

From approximately 6 months of age until 11 years of age, a **cat's energy (calorie) requirement** decreases. During this time there is a loss of lean muscle mass. Lean muscle mass drives metabolic rate, which explains why a cat's energy requirements decrease. As veterinarians, it means we need to train clients to decrease the amount of food they feed their cats beginning at the time of neutering. After a cat reaches 11 years of age, their energy requirements increase and it is likely they will require more food to maintain their body weight. If the geriatric cat is losing weight and the typical culprits causing weight loss, hyperthyroidism, diabetes and renal failure have been eliminated, increasing a cat's caloric may resolve the issue.

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#### **The Rehabilitation and Fitness Service**

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