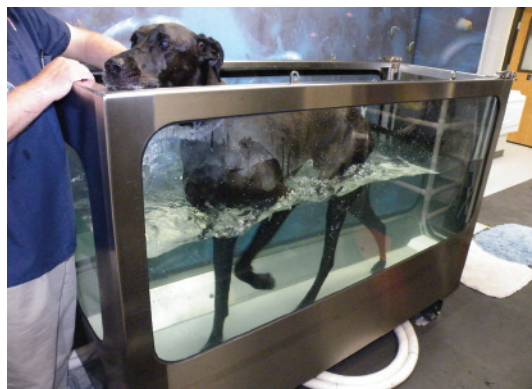


## Swimming the Pounds Away?

**FOCUS:**  
Orthopedics/Rehabilitation

Physical rehabilitation, drug therapy, restricted/modified prescription diets, and client education have become more common components of canine weight management programs. This study evaluated a structured weight loss program that included regular exercise (underwater treadmill, daily walks), a calorie-restricted diet, weekly obedience classes, and client education seminars. Eight obese dogs enrolled for 3 months were placed on a dry, high-protein, energy-restricted diet. Daily maintenance energy requirements were calculated for individual weight loss percentage. All dogs lost weight, with an overall rate of 1.5% (starting body weight/week), which was higher than previous data that summarized weight loss using a low-calorie diet (0.75%/week), or a high-protein weight loss diet (0.85%/week). This suggested that a structured exercise program in conjunction with energy restriction and/or modification and client education may contribute to successful weight loss.



### Commentary

Obesity can be secondary to various factors, but client lifestyle invariably reflects feeding and exercise. This study highlighted the importance of exercise in conjunction with proper feeding strategy. Of note is the potential for successful marketing if a practice incorporates a weight loss program or promotional contest. Unfortunately, the study sample size was small and lacked a control group to further support use of an underwater treadmill. Even if a practice does

not have a treadmill, development of a basic, commonsense exercise regimen with regular weigh-ins and client support can be beneficial *and fun*.—Heather Troyer, DVM, DABVP, CVA

### Source

Incorporation of exercise using an underwater treadmill and active client education into a weight management program for obese dogs. Chauvet A, Laclair J, Elliott DA, German AJ. *CAN VET J* 52:491-496, 2011.

## Cleaning + Disinfection = *Giardia* Management

*Giardia canis* can be difficult to eliminate, especially in group housing. In this study, researchers tested a disinfection protocol in combination with drug treatment to control an outbreak in a dog kennel. The experimental group included 6 infected dogs housed as a group in a large kennel. Treatment for this group began with shampooing each dog with a product containing chlorhexidine and oral treatment with ronidazole (30–50 mg/kg PO q12h for 7 days). Each enclosure was disinfected with 4-chlorine-M-cresol. Treatment protocols were repeated on day 6 of the study, and daily cleaning with standard agents occurred on all other days. The control group contained 7 dogs and received only

standard cleaning treatment (ie, without ronidazole) until day 47, when both groups received the same enclosure disinfection and bathing protocols. At this time, ronidazole treatment was administered to the control group. Dogs in the experimental group tested negative for *Giardia* cysts and antigen up to 26 days after the final ronidazole treatment, while at least 1 (and up to 5) in the control group tested positive throughout the study.

### Commentary

Because *G canis* spreads in loose diarrheal feces and its cyst stage is highly resistant to environmental conditions, infection can spread rapidly and is hard to contain.

Ronidazole is currently used to treat *Tritrichomonas foetus* infection in cats, but this study also demonstrated its efficacy as a treatment for giardiasis. When combined with diligence in cleaning and disinfection, *G canis* outbreaks can be effectively managed, even in a large group setting.—Carly Jordan, PhD

### Source

Control of *Giardia* infections with ronidazole and intensive hygiene management in a dog kennel. Fiechter R, Deplazes P, Schnyder M. *VET PARASITOL* 187:93-98, 2012.

CONTINUES