



PURINA® PRO PLAN® Vet Nurse Symposium 2024

Empowering the Vet Nurse Journey

How to Initiate Nutrition Conversations: Tips & Tricks

Dr. Julie Churchill

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Veterinary Nutrition at University of Minnesota



Think of your favorite holiday.....





Now how many of you thought of a favorite dish or recipe when you thought of your holiday?



My bias

- *Nutritionist* in clinical practice and teaching
- Goal-help veterinary teams promote excellent health through great nutrition
- Absolute belief in power of nutrition
- Nutrition = Nurture
- *Do have a* passion for people and their pets
- Help pets live longer – not just survive but thrive (live long and prosper)

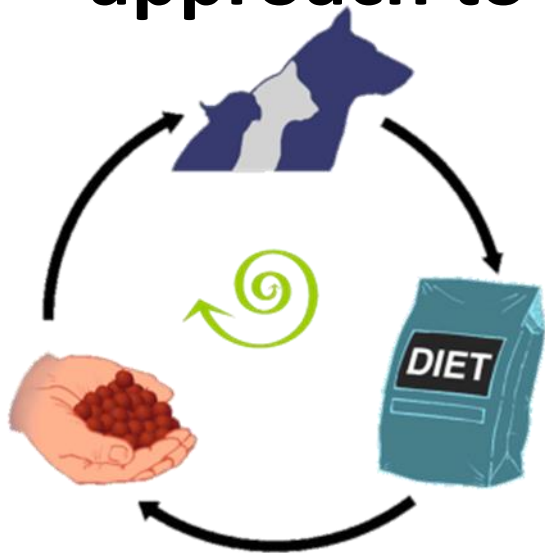
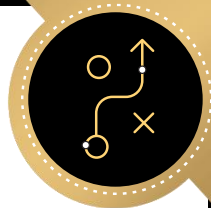


Enhance Your Nutrition Talking Toolkit

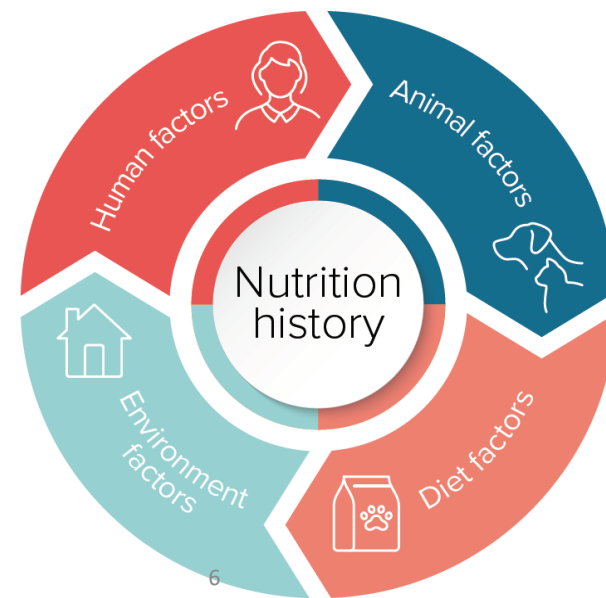


- › Develop your framework for each nutritional conversation:
 - › Assessment of needs- patient and the client
 - › Recommendation – what to feed, amount/day, and frequency
 - › Follow-up to evaluate & record outcomes – stay connected!
- › Key communication skills to address nutrition conversations:
 - › Find common ground
 - › Listen for and identify client expectations – clearly state your expectations, too
 - › Determine ‘readiness-to-change’ to set client and pet up for success
 - › Shared decision making
- › Use your communication skills
 - › Share your passion with empathy and clarity
 - › Address nutrition-related questions
- › Remember, these are transferable skills

Circle of Nutrition approach to helping pets through Nutrition



- Fifth vital assessment



The art of taking a diet history...



www.vangoghgallery.com

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Short Diet History Form

Please answer the following questions about your pet

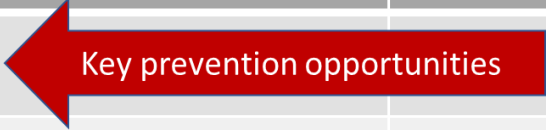
Pet's name: _____ Species/breed: _____ Age: _____

Owner's name: _____

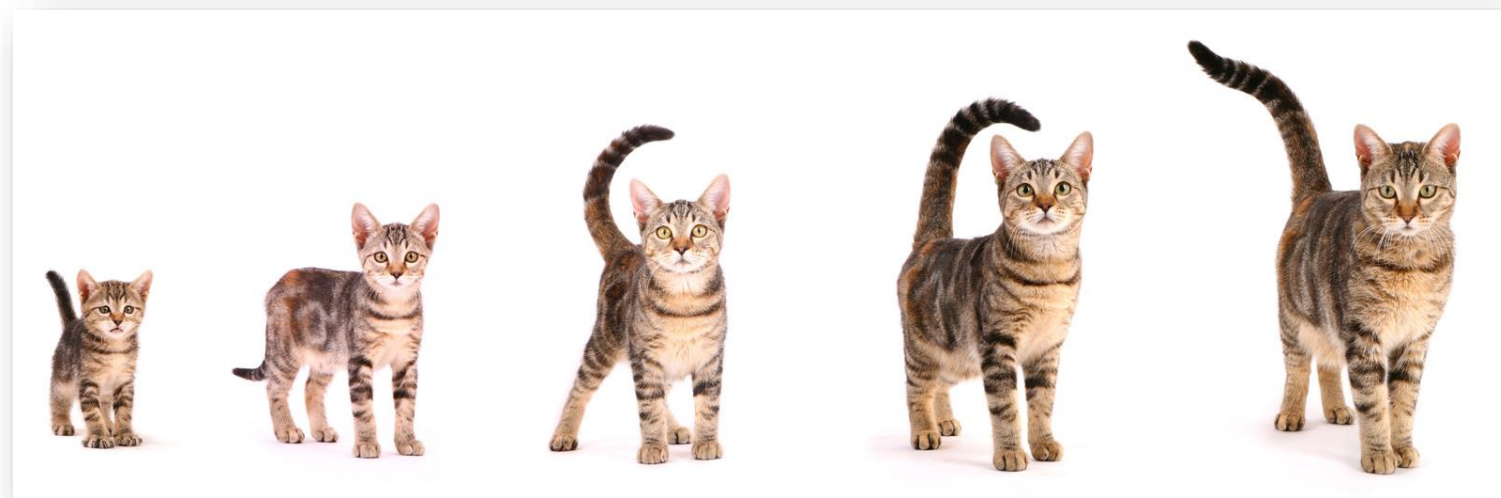
Date form completed: _____



Nutritional Screen for risk factors	Require extended evaluation if (✓)
Life stage needs (include time of spay/neuter)	✓
<u>HISTORY</u>	
Treats/snacks/human food > 10%	
Inadequate information/inappropriate feeding/food	
Unconventional diets	
Previous/ongoing medical problems	
Altered GI function or signs	
<u>PHYSICAL EXAM FINDINGS:</u>	
Any abnormal BCS (≠5/9)	
Any abnormal MCS	
Unintentional weight loss OR gain	
New medical condition	
Poor skin hair coat	
Dental disease	



Life stage needs.....Life stage foods



How Do You Start? Ask Permission



Puppy/Kitten exams



Lifestage

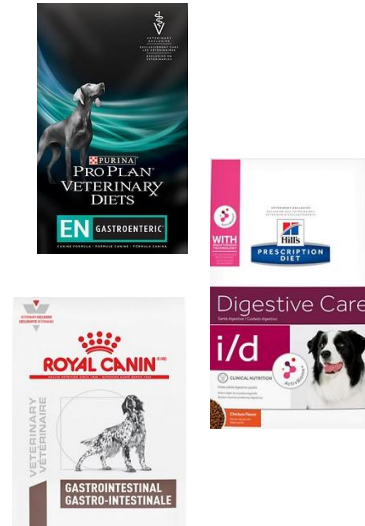
Myth-Busting



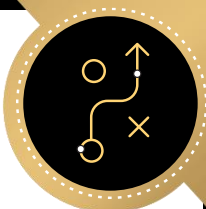
Weight Prevention & Management



Therapeutic Nutrition



Identify Common Goals & Common ground



Targeted discussion

JAVMA



Veterinary clients prefer benefit-focused online communication while clinic websites uncommonly communicate benefits of preventive care services

Katja A. Sutherland, PhD^{1*}; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD¹; Kassandra Blais-Vaillancourt, BSc¹; Margaret Gober, VMD²; Heather Berst, MA, VMD²



Published online November 1, 2024

doi.org/10.2460/javma.24.09.0568

Proactive Considerations for Growth



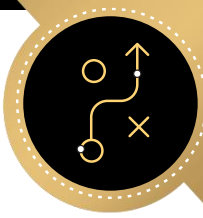
Opportunity to create nutrition culture



Priority-refocus our efforts

Prevention efforts “an ounce of prevention...”

- Support healthy growth (orthopedic, behavior)
- Prevent unhealthy gain
- Significant health benefits from maintaining a lean body weight
- Target by known risk factors



Keep treats in perspective



Cats 5-10 Calories/day



Small dog 25 Calories/day

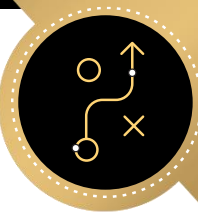


Mid size dog- 60 -70 Calories/day



Large dog- 85-100 Calories/day

Make a specific treat plan !



**Treats are so much
more than food**

**Be
with your dog**



Targeted discussions

JAVMA



Impact on life expectancy was the most important information to clients when considering whether to take action for an overweight or obese dog

Abby R. Davies, MSc¹; Katja A. Sutherland, PhD¹; Catherine N. H. Groves, MSc¹; Lauren E. Grant, PhD¹; Megan L. Shepherd, DVM, PhD, DACVIM²; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD^{1*}

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OBJECTIVE

To determine dog owner preferences for information communicated during veterinarian-client obesity-related conversations within companion animal practice.



RESULTS

A total of 1,108 surveys were analyzed, with most participating dog owners residing in Canada. The most important weight-related attribute was life expectancy (relative importance, 28.56%), followed by the timeline for developing arthritis (19.24%), future quality of life (18.91%), change to cost of food (18.90%), and future mobility (14.34%).

CLINICAL RELEVANCE

Results suggest that dog owners may consider information relating to an extension of their dog's life as the most important aspect of an obesity-related veterinary recommendation. By integrating dog owner preferences into discussions between clients and veterinary professionals about obesity, there is the potential to encourage more clients to engage in weight management efforts for their overweight or obese dog.

Prevent Seasonal Flux

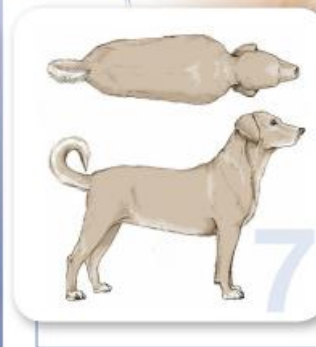


What does “healthy” look and feel like?



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Body Condition Score



UNDER IDEAL

- 1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

- 4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

OVER IDEAL

- 6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.
- 8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.
- 9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent.

German A, et al. Comparison of a bioimpedance monitor with dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry for noninvasive estimation of percentage body fat in dogs. AJVR 2010;71:393-398.



PURINA Your Pet, Our Passion.®

“I’ve told them a thousands time to stop giving all those treats!”



- Definition of insanity- doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result!

Best predictor of adherence

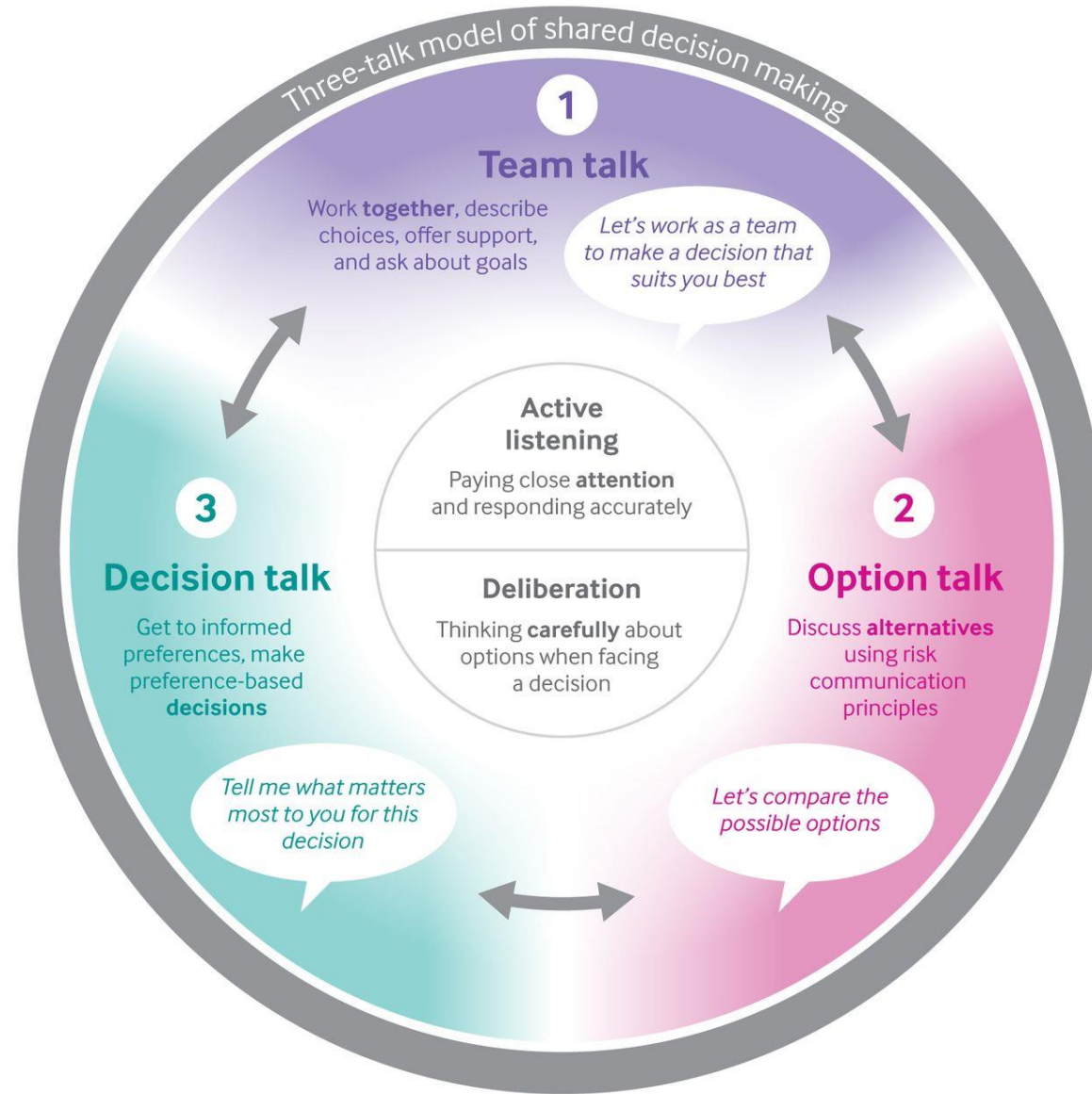
- Veterinary team interviewing skills
- Quality of the veterinary –client relationship

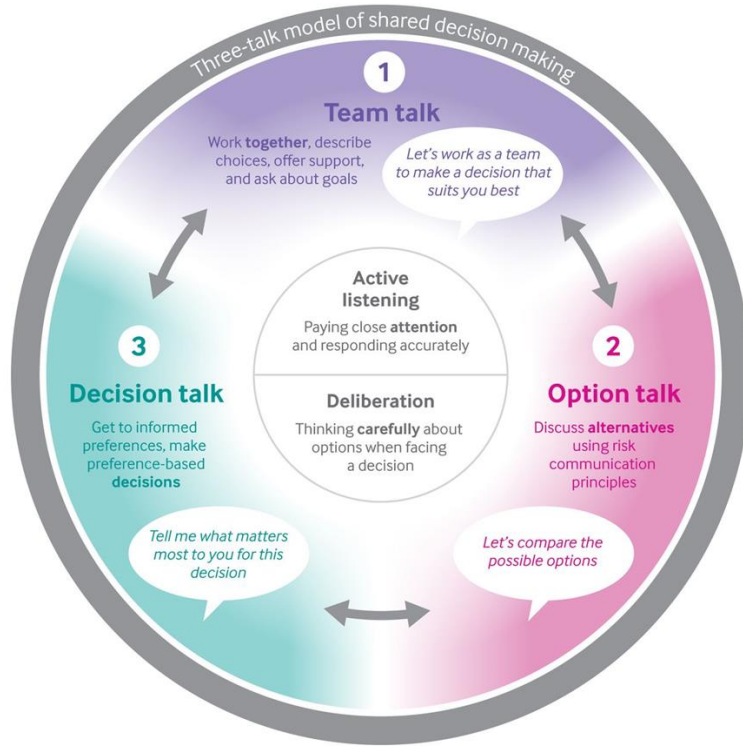


Promote ~~Compliance~~ Adherence → Concordance

- Believe in Value
- Enhance the experience
- Use impactful Stories
- Include Clients as part of the team
- Strive for consistency (practice protocols)

Three-talk model of shared decision making





Using Core Communication skills

- Empathy
- Open-ended Inquiry
- Reflective listening
- Non-verbals

Team Talk

Assess Goals (**hopes/dreams**)
Assess ability & motivation
Offer choices
Justify choices
Provide support & patterning

Option Talk

Check knowledge
Lost options
Describe options
Support decisions
Clarify & Summarize

Decision Talk

Elicit Preferences
Move to a decision
Plan to review and revise together

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Small animal general practitioners discuss nutrition infrequently despite assertion of indication, citing barriers

Elizabeth E. Alvarez, DVM, DABVP^{1*}; Kelly K. Schultz, MS, DVM¹; Amanda M. Floerchinger, DVM, MBA²; Jennifer L. Hull, MS, DVM²

JAVMA | OCTOBER 2022 | VOL 260 | NO. 13



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Veterinary technicians contribute to shared decision-making during companion animal veterinary appointments

Natasha Janke, PhD^{1*}; Jane R. Shaw, DVM, PhD¹; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD²

JAVMA | DECEMBER 2022 | VOL 260 | NO. 15

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Clients prefer collaborative decision-making with veterinarians regardless of appointment type

Catherine N. H. Groves, MSc*; Jason B. Coe, DVM, PhD; Katja A. Sutherland, PhD; Cathy Bauman, DVM, PhD; Lauren E. Grant, PhD

doi.org/10.2460/javma.24.06.0421

Nutrition Assessment (5th vital assessment)

- See something, say something

	Require extended evaluation if (✓)
Life stage needs (include time of spay/neuter)	✓
<u>HISTORY</u>	
Treats/snacks/human food > 10%	
Inadequate information/inappropriate feeding/food	
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Stages of change

- Transtheoretical model
- Psychologists developed to understand how humans make changes in behavior to improve their health.....
- Veterinarians need *client* to change their behavior



Assessing readiness for change

- **Precontemplation**

- No intention of taking action in next 6 months
- Resistant, unmotivated, unaware

- **Contemplation**

- Aware of pros/cons of changing, intending within 6 mo.
- Stuck in “thinking about it”

- **Decision making (preparation)**

- Plans to take action in next month
- Recognize the problem, may have read or asked@ pet store



Assessing readiness for change



- **Action**

- Taking action to reduce risks
- May have decreased treats or tried a different food
- May need guidance for optimal care


- **Maintenance**

- Continued action to prevent relapse

- **Lapses (relapse- happens)**

Use stage-appropriate intervention

Use the *right* approach
for the *right* client
at the *right* time

A low-angle, rear-view shot of a runner's legs in black shorts and grey sneakers, running on a paved road with a yellow center line. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and the lighting suggests a sunset or sunrise. The runner's legs are in mid-stride, and the road stretches out into the distance.

**Remember, it's a marathon,
not a sprint
Pace yourself**

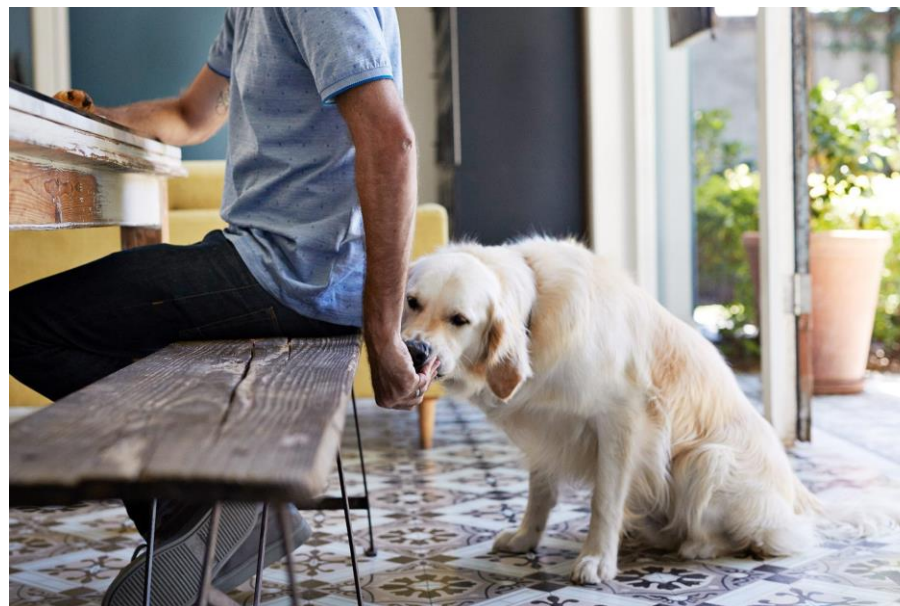
Empathy



What's the difference between
Sympathy and Empathy?

Empathy. Responses that demonstrate an accurate understanding and acceptance of the client's feelings and concerns

Invite and allow the emotion(s) of food



Communicating your recommendation

Make A Specific Recommendation

1. Tell the client **what food** you recommend, **and why**. Be specific.
Type, amount and frequency
2. Ask what concerns they might have in following your recommendation.
3. **What other questions do they have?**
4. **Include a follow up plan**
5. Write your specific nutritional recommendation in patient record.

Before your client leaves.....

- What Questions Do You Have?
- Did You Get What You Needed?
- We'll Be In Touch
- Don't say it unless you mean it!

Create the Program that works for you

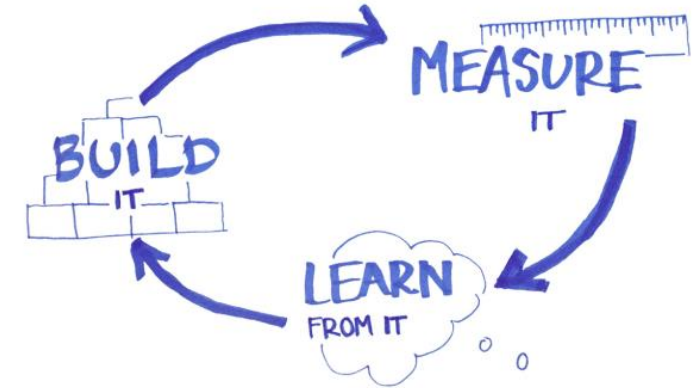
Consider package programs

Wellness program or package ideas

- Technician managed
 - Puppy/kitten counseling
 - Nutrition consultation post every spay/neuter
- Life stage nutrition
- Obesity prevention

Nutrition and Disease-therapeutic plan

- Screened and risks identified- veterinary responsibility
- Chronic disease package- follow-up plan
- Obesity treatment – include all team members



Summary

Thoughts to Improve Care



- Vet teams believe and value their nutrition program and/or recommendations (health focus)
- Include clients as part of the team
- Combine excellent communication skills with concepts of behavioral change and shared-decision making
- Strive for consistency in verbal and written recommendations
- Give clients time; stay flexible





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Thank you!

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Resources



› Centre Square:



WSAVA Global Nutrition Toolkit:



› Pet Nutrition Alliance



AAHA Nutritional Guidelines:



› Petfoodology:

