

# JOHNSON VET SERVICES

DR ERIK JOHNSON IS FOUND AT DRJOHNSON.COM



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## Dogs That Are Fat But Barely Eat At All!

Not a day goes by that I don't meet the person who's dog has become increasingly finicky about the food and the amount that it will eat. Owners lament that the dog "does not like" so many foods. To find one that it will actually eat is difficult. Invariably, these dogs are overweight. Some are malignantly obese. I am stunned by the mindset where the person is trying to **coax a dog to eat** more calories when it is obviously had too many.

The reason that animals become resistant to certain foods is because of the animal brain. For literally millions of years dogs have survived because they were *fast enough to get away from predators, and fast enough to catch that delicious squirrel.*

Parts of the brain that control the appetite are the hippocampus, the thalamus, and the hypothalamus. They are amazing because when a pet starts to exceed mother nature's intended bodyweight the appetite begins to fall off so that the pet can remain viable to feed itself and elude predators. That is when it's appetite becomes more normal and mother nature specifies that they would eat variably at each meal **sometimes declining food entirely** and that is when folks change foods to something that they **like** better. Which they will eat a little bit more interestedly *to their detriment.*



"I don't know why he's fat, he barely eats anything at all!" is back asswards. "He barely eats anything at all because he's fat!"

The best way to accomplish weight loss for a dog is to leave a 10-year-old in charge of feeding them. They will just put the food down and sometimes even forget. They won't notice how much the dog eats, so when the dog becomes "finicky" They will not change foods or entice them at all.

Of course, some dogs **don't** autoregulate, their hippocampus/thalamus is nonfunctional and they will eat themselves to death.

So the next time your dog "doesn't like his food" "I want you immediately to say in your mind, "Thalamus, hippocampus!" sounds like a Harry Potter incantation. But that is exactly what's going on and we must obey those structures so that our pets can maintain a relatively lean body weight.

To find out what your dogs ideal body weight would be, simply feed of food of moderate appeal. Any of the Costco diets, Nutro, Nature's Recipe, Blue, so many different foods which are appropriate but not delicious. "Your dog will love it", "Excite your dog", ***we don't want that kind of thing because we do not want the tongue, which is stronger than the hippocampus, to win.***

To recap, the tongue outweighs the hippocampus. The hypothalamus stands no chance against taste buds. When you find something that the dog will eat eagerly, including table food because "***he only likes chicken***" it is because you have positioned the tastebuds to defeat the appetite centers and the dog is on his way up in weight.

"I don't know why he's fat, he barely eats anything at all." That might be the most common lament that I hear on the ***daily*** basis. The problem is people have it backwards. He hardly eats anything at all because he's fat. And in fact, THAT he eats anything at all is the reason he stays that way.

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