

# Animal Neglect: Determining Body Condition

Purina developed The Body Condition System to help pet owners (and investigators) judge if their pet's appearance is normal or not. The images on the right are numbered to correspond with the descriptions below. *This handout is available online at [www.pet-abuse.com](http://www.pet-abuse.com).*

- 1. EMACIATED:** Ribs, backbones, pelvic bones, etc. all prominent from a distance. No visible body fat, obvious loss of muscle mass.
- 2. VERY THIN:** Ribs, backbones, pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Minimal loss of muscle mass.
- 3. THIN:** Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Top of backbone visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.
- 4. UNDERWEIGHT:** Ribs easily palpable with no visible fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.
- 5. IDEAL:** Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.
- 6. OVERWEIGHT:** Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernable viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.
- 7. HEAVY:** 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 absent.
- 8. OBESE:** Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over backbone and base of tail. No waist or abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distension may be present.
- 9. GROSSLY OBESE:** Massive fat deposits on chest, spine, and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and legs. Obvious abdominal distension.

