



What is diabetes mellitus?

Diabetes mellitus is a disease that causes increased sugar (known as glucose) in a pet's blood. Insulin is needed for the body to use sugar and diabetic pets do not make enough of it. Diabetic pets need insulin given by their owners in order to have this balance and stay healthy. Without insulin, the body must get energy by breaking down other fats. This causes your pet to lose weight even though they are very hungry.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

The most common symptoms of diabetes are:

- drinking more
- peeing more
- weight loss even when they are eating more
- drowsiness

There are other balance and eye problems that can be signs of untreated diabetes.

Which pets can get diabetes?

While any pet can get diabetes, it is seen mostly in overweight, older animals. Symptoms may get worse when pets are stressed.

Why do some pets get sick?

Most pets can handle high blood sugar for some time. However, using fats instead of their blood sugar as a fuel source can lead to severe changes to their blood. This concerning crisis, called diabetic ketoacidosis, requires intensive hospitalization and care.

Can diabetes go away? YES- in some cats.

The treatment for some cats with early or mild diabetes are weight loss and prescription food. Cats are more likely to stop being diabetic if treated with insulin injections and special food. Getting to a healthy weight is very important. The good news is that some cats actually return to a normal, non-diabetic state. Because diabetes can go into remission in some cats, it is important to watch them closely.

How is diabetes treated?

In most cases, diabetes is treated by giving insulin injections twice a day and feeding a special diet. Some pets need other medicines to make treating their diabetes easier.

Only give the insulin shot if your pet eats. Giving insulin when the blood sugar is low can be more harmful than the sugar level being too high for a period of time. For this same reason, if you make a mistake during the injection or are unsure if you or someone else in the household already gave the insulin, do not give a second dose.

Insulin must be kept refrigerated. Before drawing up the insulin dose, gently rock the insulin bottle. Shaking the bottle will break down the medication and it will not work as well.

Signs of low blood sugar include: weakness, pacing and staring, seeming dazed or confused, seizures, and extreme sleepiness. If any of these occur, give your pet a few tablespoons of Karo syrup to bring the blood sugar up quickly. If they are alert enough, feed a small meal. Consult

with a veterinarian before giving the next dose of insulin. If your pet is not rapidly improving, seek emergency care.

Recheck blood sugar levels regularly with the veterinarian. Diabetics' needs can change over time and we may need to adjust the insulin dose. Once your pet is regulated well, recheck appointments are needed much less often. We also carry a device that allows you to track your pet's sugar levels via a device reader from home. Ask us if you are interested in this option.

You can find helpful information on the internet about managing a diabetic dog at this website:
<https://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/outreach/Pet-Health-Topics/categories/diseases/diabetes-mellitus>