

Clinical Signs

In both dogs and cats you will likely see:

- Excessive drinking
- Excessive urinating
- Excessive eating
- Weight Loss

Diagnosis

If you see these signs, your veterinarian will likely run a blood test to rule out many diseases. A urine test might also be indicated.

Diagnosis of diabetes is made when the **blood sugar (glucose) is high**. Diabetics usually have a glucose higher than 200 in a dog and higher than 300 in a cat.



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Diabetes Mellitus



“Sugar” Diabetes



A disease of both
dogs and cats

Treatment

DOGS

Because diabetes in dogs is caused by a lack of insulin production by the pancreas, the treatment for diabetes is to **replace that insulin**. Over the years many different types of insulin have been used in dogs.

- Currently we are actually using human insulin, or Humulin. This is an injection, given by you, under the skin every 12 hours. The needle is very small, and we will teach you how to do this.
- It is very important that the injections be given **AFTER** a meal so that the blood sugar does not become too low. Do not give if your pet won't eat.
- It is also important that the injections be given at about the same time every day.
- Routinely, we will check your dog's blood sugar with a "curve", which will require him to stay with us for the day. This is to make sure the amount of insulin we're giving is not too much or too little.
- Contact us sooner if your pet stops eating, continues to lose weight, or starts again to drink and urinate a lot.

CATS

Cats have a form of diabetes known as "non insulin dependent." This does not mean that they don't need to be treated with insulin. It does mean, however, that in addition to insulin, dietary management is very beneficial and may actually decrease the need for insulin over time.

- In cats we use an insulin called PZI. Initially we start with injections every 12 hours.
- These must be given after a meal. If your cat is not eating, do not give the insulin.
- Give the injections about the same time every day.
- A **special diet** is valuable in managing your cat's blood sugar. High protein, low carbohydrate may keep the dosage of insulin lower.
- A glucose "curve" will be done every few weeks until insulin is at an acceptable level. Ask about serum fructosamine for monitoring.
- Clinical signs are very important to monitor glucose in cats. Call if water drinking or urination volume increases.

Ketoacidosis (complicated diabetes)

Ketoacidosis occurs when the blood sugar has been high for awhile and the body starts to mobilize fat. This is broken down into ketones, which can then cause illness (acidosis). Ketoacidotic animals are very ill and need urgent treatment to get the body back to a normal balance.

Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)

If too much insulin is given or insulin is given without food, occasionally the blood sugar can get too LOW. These animals get very tired, sometime almost comatose. If you suspect this, immediately give sugar by mouth (caro syrup, for example) and call your veterinarian.