

Diabetes Mellitus (Dog)

Diabetes mellitus is a disease of the pancreas, a small organ responsible for producing digestive enzymes, and insulin. Insulin regulates and controls the delivery of glucose (sugar) in the body. To put it simply, diabetes mellitus is the condition that results from the failure of the pancreas to regulate blood sugar. Clinical signs of diabetes are therefore related to elevated concentrations of blood glucose (high blood sugar), and the inability of the body to use glucose as an energy source.

Understanding Canine Diabetes

Since the body is unable to store glucose, the body is starving. This is why dogs with diabetes eat ravenously, but continue to lose weight. The excess glucose in the blood spills over into the urine. Sugar attracts water, which is what causes your pet to have an increase in thirst and urination.

What are the clinical signs?

Increased thirst



Increased urination



Weight loss



Increased appetite



It is important to note that the biggest predisposing factor for diabetes mellitus in dogs is being overweight.

How is diabetes mellitus diagnosed?

Diabetes is diagnosed based on clinical signs, persistently elevated blood glucose, and glucose present in the urine. In cases that are not caught early, a more advanced and severe form of the disease may be present, called **diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)**. Ketones are toxic breakdown products of glucose, which circulate in the blood and make an animal feel sick, and can be life-threatening.

How Is Diabetes Mellitus Treated?



Insulin Injections

Diabetes is a treatable and manageable condition, but it requires dedication and long-term care. You must follow a routine with your pet which requires a financial and personal commitment for treatment. The mainstay for treatment is to start your dog on insulin injections. These are done twice daily (every 12 hours) on a set schedule after meals. Insulin helps to store glucose in the body and to reduce circulating glucose in the blood.

What Happens if My Dog Gets Too Much Insulin?

Giving too much insulin can cause blood sugar to drop too low (hypoglycemia), which is dangerous. Always give insulin after your dog has eaten at least half of their meal. If your dog doesn't eat or vomits, give half the insulin dose and call us.

Signs of hypoglycemia include:

- Weakness
- Lethargy
- Unsteadiness
- Seizures

If you see any of these signs, seek immediate veterinary care. We can provide an emergency plan to follow at home before heading to the hospital.

When to Call Us:

- If your dog shows signs of hypoglycemia
- If they miss two meals in a row
- If they have vomiting, diarrhea, or any unexpected issues



Proper Nutrition

Nutrition is an important part of management, and we may recommend switching your pet to a **prescription diabetic food (high in protein, low in carbs)** to help reduce the amount of insulin that is required to manage their disease.



Weight Management

Weight loss is crucial, and an individual weight loss plan will be made.



Managing Your Dog's Diabetes
Regular rechecks are necessary to ensure the insulin dose is correct and your dog's diabetes is properly managed. You can also monitor glucose levels at home using urine strips. Factors that can affect diabetes control include:

- Incorrect insulin handling, storage, or administration
- Incorrect insulin dose
- Other health issues (e.g., hormonal problems)
- Changes in diet or exercise

Keeping track of these factors helps keep your dog's diabetes under control.



Call us at 671-646-CARE (2273) during business hours. Our after-hour's care contact number is 671-929-4904 and then follow the instructions.