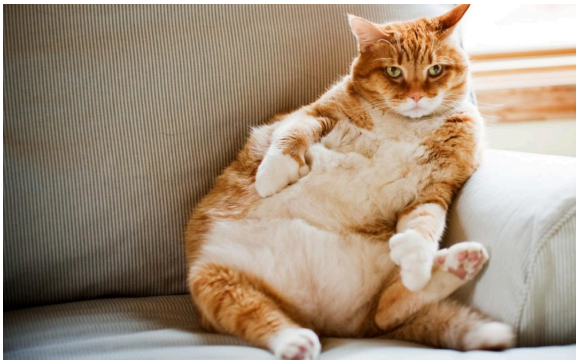




Diabetes Mellitus in Cats



What is Diabetes Mellitus?

Diabetes mellitus is caused by the failure of the pancreas to produce enough insulin to regulate blood sugar, or the body cannot use the insulin for glucose metabolism. This is insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (also called Type 1 Diabetes).

Who is More at Risk?

- 0.5-1% of the general feline population suffers from diabetes.
 - Most diabetic cats are older than 6 years old, but a cat can be affected at any age.
 - Obesity is a significant risk factor
 - A large portion of diabetic cats are obese, indoor male cats.
 - The number of diabetic cats is increasing at an alarming rate due to the number of overweight/obese cats.
 - The long term use of corticosteroids can predispose a cat to diabetes.
 - As cats age, they may develop other diseases that either predispose the cat to diabetes, or may affect the way the cat responds to diabetic treatment.
 - Thyroid disease
 - Heart disease
 - Kidney disease
 - UTI's
 - Skin Infections
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Symptoms of Diabetes in Cats

Symptoms of diabetes in cats can include:

- Increased hunger
- Weight loss (despite increased hunger)
- Increased urination
- Increased drinking
- Recurrent UTI's
- Recurrent skin infections
- Walking on their "hocks" or "flat-footed"

Diagnosis

Early diagnosis of diabetes is essential for a long, healthy life. When a cat is brought to the veterinary office with the signs/symptoms of diabetes, the veterinarian will run a blood test, as well as a urinalysis to check for high levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood, as well as glucose in the urine. Diabetes is the only common disease that will cause the blood glucose level to rise substantially. Once the disease is confirmed, your veterinarian will speak with you about a treatment plan moving forward to ensure the best life/health of your cat.

Treatment + Management

There are a couple different options for treating a cat with diabetes. A cat can be given insulin injections twice a day (every 12 hours); or there is a new once-daily oral medication.

Treatment is decided based on what would be best for the cat.

Once the veterinarian has started your cat on a low, initial dose of insulin, a blood-glucose curve will be performed in 2 weeks. During this time, the cat stays in the hospital for most of the day and a blood glucose level is checked every 2 hours. The insulin dose may be adjusted based on the results.

Once the correct dose is achieved, it is recommended to have a BG curve done every 6 months, sooner if a cat is showing symptoms of the diabetes being out of control (increased thirst, weightloss, increased urination, decreased appetite).

Successful treatment of diabetes requires regular vet exams, blood and urine tests, and monitoring your pet's weight, appetite, thirst, and urination.

Many diabetic cats benefit from a low-carb, high protein diet; this diet limits the amount of glucose absorbed from the GI tract.

In rare cases, a cat can go into "diabetic remission." This occurs when a cat maintains a normal glucose level for more than 4 weeks without insulin or oral medications. Not all cats go into remission, but those that do do not require insulin for months to years.
