

Del Ray Animal Hospital
524 E. Mount Ida Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22301
(703) 739-0000
www.delrayanimalhospital.com

Diabetes in the Cat

Your cat has been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus, a condition that causes abnormally high levels of glucose (sugar) to build up in the blood and urine. This happens when the body is not producing or utilizing insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone normally produced by the pancreas. It allows the cells in the body to take glucose from the blood and use it for their metabolism. Without insulin, the cells "starve" and blood glucose levels remain elevated. This will cause your pet to urinate and drink more and can make them more susceptible to infections- especially bladder infections. We believe that obesity is a predisposing risk factor. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to a serious and even fatal condition call ketoacidosis.

Diabetes is a condition that is managed rather than cured. Most pets will require insulin injections twice daily for the rest of their lives. Some cats do well on oral hypoglycemic medications. Weight loss (for obese patients) and feeding a canned high protein/low carbohydrate diet such as DM diet will help in regulating your cat's blood sugar. Other canned kitten diets may also be helpful.

It will be important for you to monitor your pet closely once insulin injections have begun. An overdose of insulin can cause a very serious drop in blood sugar (hypoglycemia) that can render your pet weak and disoriented and can even cause seizures and death. If your pet is showing any evidence of strange behavior while on insulin DO NOT GIVE ANOTHER DOSE OF INSULIN! If you forget when an insulin shot was last given or accidentally "miss" while injecting, don't attempt to redose or double up. It is much safer to skip a dose of insulin than to give too much. Karo syrup can be rubbed onto the gums of hypoglycemic animals to temporarily raise blood sugar levels until you can seek veterinary care.

In cats, the symptoms of hypoglycemia may be very difficult to detect. Some owners have reported very subtle signs such as trembling of the legs, twitching of the ears, and mild disorientation. To avoid a life threatening situation, it is best to monitor you cat's urine at least once or twice a week to check for the presence of glucose. We will provide you with special urine test paper that can easily be mixed into clumping kitty litter at home. A negative urine glucose reading should prompt a call to your veterinarian. The next insulin dose should be skipped until you can speak with a doctor.

Current recommendations for evaluating your cat's response to treatment include home urine glucose checks and monitoring water consumption, urine output and appetite. Once your cat is well regulated, thirst and urine output should dramatically decrease. We will also periodically check your cat's weight, blood sugar, and blood fructosamine levels. It may be necessary to bring your cat to the hospital for a glucose curve so that we can be sure that he/she is receiving the right dose of insulin. We will draw blood every 2 hours throughout the day to find out when the insulin activity is peaking and when blood glucose levels are at their lowest. Your veterinarian will discuss the results with you and recommend any changes in the dose of insulin.

Give your cat _____ units of _____ insulin _____

Feed your cat _____

Check your cat's urine glucose levels _____

Recheck _____