



DIABETES MELLITUS IN THE CAT

Diabetes mellitus is a disease of animals and people in which the amount or activity of insulin is inadequate. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas and used by the body to control the amount of glucose in the blood, and the amount of glucose entering the body's cells. Glucose is a monosaccharide, also known as dextrose, which is found in certain foodstuffs and in the normal blood of all animals. It is the end product of carbohydrate metabolism and is the chief source of energy for living organisms, its utilization being controlled by insulin. Diabetes may result from any of several abnormalities in the body's process of insulin production and use.

METABOLIC CHANGES

The alterations in body functions that result from the deficiency of insulin are complex. In short, the normal metabolism of carbohydrates (glucose), proteins, and fats is disturbed. The first signs of diabetes include excessive thirst, hunger and urinating.

TREATMENT

Diabetes mellitus in your pet can be controlled with insulin therapy. Insulin must be given by an injection once or twice daily. The drug is injected under the skin with a syringe designed for insulin administration. Insulin preparations also vary in their action. Some insulin lasts a long time, while others are short acting. Cats differ from dogs and humans in the length of time that insulin lasts in the body.

TREATMENT AT HOME

The owner should make the following observations to be sure that the pet's insulin dose is correct:

- How much water is the pet drinking? Once the pet is regulated, the water intake should decrease.
- How much food is the pet eating? The well-regulated pet will not have the voracious appetite of the unregulated diabetic pet. However, if your pet stops eating, this is of concern and the veterinarian should be called.
- How much is the pet urinating? The amount of urine passed should decrease in the regulated diabetic pet.
- Is the pet losing weight? The pet should be weighed weekly. The regulated pet will maintain its weight.
- Is the pet depressed and lethargic? Most pets on the proper dose of insulin will return to normal activity.

COST OF TREATMENT

During the first month of treatment your cat will be given a dose of PZI insulin, then will come into the hospital to have weekly blood glucose curves. The cost of PZI is \$87.00 per vial, and will last for 30 to 50 days, depending on the amount of insulin given. Blood glucose curves are approximately \$50.00 per day. Once your cat is regulated they will come in every 3 months for a fructosamine level which costs

\$35.00. So the cost for a year for a diabetic animal is approximately \$700-800 per year after the first year.

RULES TO REMEMBER

If a diabetic pet becomes very weak or has a seizure, hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) may be the cause. This occurs if too much insulin is given. If hypoglycemia occurs, massage Karo syrup into your pet's gums and seek veterinary assistance immediately.

When giving an injection, if only part of the insulin goes under the skin and the rest onto the fur, do not give more insulin.

Always make sure your pet is eating well. If a pet is not eating and depressed, contact a veterinarian and **do not give insulin.**

The most important thing to remember is **not to give your pet too much insulin.**

Questions or concerns always feel free to call our office! 413-367-0062