



## Diabetes in DOGS

Diabetes mellitus (DM), or sugar diabetes, occurs when the pancreas gland does not produce enough insulin. Insulin is the hormone that allows the body to utilize blood sugar (glucose). As insulin levels fall, blood glucose levels rise producing many adverse side effects. A common cause of DM in dogs is chronic inflammation of the pancreas gland which causes destruction of insulin producing cells in the pancreas. This is known as Type I DM. Type II DM, which is caused by decreased action of insulin in the body, is uncommon in dogs. Common signs include increased thirst and urination, increased appetite, and weight loss. Some dogs may develop cataracts suddenly and go blind.

**Diagnostic Tests:** DM is diagnosed when the fasting blood sugar level is significantly elevated. A urinalysis may also show glucose in the urine. Additional tests to look for concurrent diseases may be necessary. If other hormonal diseases are suspected (such as Cushing's disease or hypothyroidism) hormonal testing may be performed.

**Treatment:** Most dogs with DM require injections of insulin combined with dietary management to control their disease. Insulin injections are typically administered at home twice daily with a meal. There are several types of insulin available and our team will discuss what is best for your dog. Prescription diets for diabetic dogs are readily available and can significantly improve the ability to manage DM. These diets are low-fat, high-fiber, and contain complex carbohydrates. It is important to give insulin around meal times. \*Note: When a dog is on insulin therapy, it is important to monitor for signs of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Signs may include weakness, tremors, mental dullness, collapse, seizure, or coma. If you see these signs, immediately offer a favorite food or rub corn syrup on the gums as this is a good source of glucose. Do not force any food or liquid into the mouth if your dog is unable to swallow.

**Follow-up Care:** Monitoring is important to keep the blood glucose in the desired range. Home monitoring involves keeping track of water intake and frequency of urinations. After starting insulin, we will schedule a time for your dog stay with us for most of the day so we can monitor blood glucose every few hours to ensure proper dosage.

**Prognosis:** With patience and persistence, most dogs with DM can be regulated and successfully managed. This will require the owner to educate themselves about the disease and treatment and stay in close contact with our medical team. Many dogs with DM can live a fairly normal life for several years.

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