



Diabetes Mellitus

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination
Blood work
Urinalysis

Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy
Weight management
Medication

Nutritional Plan

Consistent diet
(timing, amount,
type)
Feed for maintenance
of ideal weight

Diabetes Mellitus

Your pet has been diagnosed with diabetes mellitus. This is a condition that develops because of a lack of insulin or the body's inability to respond to insulin. Insulin is a hormone the body needs to help it use blood sugar. Clinical signs may include weakness, increased drinking and urination, weight loss and depression, with increased appetite or lack of appetite. Cataracts develop in some cases of diabetes mellitus in dogs. Treatment includes dietary management, weight management and insulin injections in dogs and some cats. Not all cats need insulin injections. This client education sheet will help you learn more about diabetes mellitus and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary care team.

What You Should Know About Diabetes Mellitus

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic endocrine disease that occurs in dogs. Some cats may have a temporary diabetic condition while in others it is a chronic disease. It is characterized by high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) and results when the pancreas is unable to produce enough insulin to meet the animal's needs, or in some cats, the body doesn't respond properly to the insulin. The pancreas is a gland found in your pet's body near the stomach and small intestine. In addition to insulin, it also produces enzymes that digest food.

Causes

Diabetes mellitus in dogs and cats is caused by damage to the pancreas. For some cats, it is caused by a failure to respond properly to insulin (insulin resistance.) Predisposing factors are: obesity, breed predisposition in dogs (Samoyed, miniature schnauzer, miniature poodle, pug), gender (female dogs and male cats are at greater risk), age and hormonal changes.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will perform a thorough physical examination of your pet as well as ask for details about your pet's health, appetite, water intake and urinary habits. Blood work and urinalysis is part of the necessary lab work. In complicated cases, your pet may need hospitalization for initial testing and treatment.

Treatment

Treatment requires a commitment of time and management from you. There is no cure for diabetes mellitus, but it may be controlled with diet, medication and weight management. With appropriate therapy, your pet can lead a happy, comfortable life.

Initial hospitalization may be required in some cases to stabilize your pet and start treatment. Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and following dietary recommendations. Follow a daily routine, with regular meal times, set amounts of the recommended food and consistent levels of daily exercise. If giving insulin or other medications, make sure you set regular times for treatment. Provide free access to fresh, clean water. Your veterinarian may recommend frequent follow-up exams, blood work and urinalysis to make sure your pet's diabetes is well managed.

Diabetes mellitus requires regular, careful monitoring, so make sure you keep appointments with your veterinarian.

Nutritional Plan

Depending on concurrent health issues, your veterinarian will make a dietary recommendation (product and amount) for your pet. Your veterinarian will make recommendations on timing of meals and medications, and it is critical to follow those instructions. It is important to feed a consistent diet that your pet will eat reliably. Keep the daily calorie intake constant.

Fiber can be valuable in weight management and glycemic (blood sugar) control. Your veterinarian may recommend a high-fiber, reduced-fat food with complex carbohydrates. Many cats respond well to a low-carbohydrate food with increased protein levels, so that may be the preferred approach your veterinarian uses in recommending a food for your cat. Some overweight cats may not need insulin with appropriate feeding and weight loss.

Report any changes in appetite, water intake or behavior immediately to your veterinarian.

Once your pet has been diagnosed with and is being treated for diabetes, it is very important to contact your veterinarian if you notice any changes in appetite, water intake, urinary habits or activity level.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.