



East Island Animal Hospital
東 區 動 物 醫 院

What is Diabetes Mellitus?

Every cell in the body requires energy from glucose and the cells need insulin to absorb the glucose. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas. Diabetic animals do not create enough insulin.

Glucose is supplied in the diet, directly as sugars and indirectly from fat, protein and starch. When the body is starving, it creates glucose from stored fat reserves. The process of creating glucose from fat creates toxins in the blood called ketones.

Similarly, a diabetic animal cannot absorb glucose into its cells, so it will use stored fats for energy. This can result in a dangerous accumulation of ketones in the bloodstream, a condition known as ketoacidosis.

How do we Diagnose Diabetes Mellitus?

The most common signs we see with diabetes are:

- Excessive eating
- Excessive drinking
- Excessive or frequent urination
- Weight loss

Weight gain, urinary tract infections and early cataract formation (in dogs) are often seen.

A blood glucose test and urine glucose test are required to confirm the diagnosis. In healthy animals, glucose levels in the blood are generally between 5 and 15mmol/L. Blood glucose readings over 20mmol/mL are considered abnormal and may indicate diabetes, while any glucose in the urine is a concern.

Treatment of Diabetes Mellitus

The most important part of treatment is giving injections of insulin. The initial dose of insulin varies between individual animals. Because an overdose is very dangerous, we must measure each animal's response to the injections. Your animal must stay in hospital for a 'glucose curve'. If your pet is *very* sick (ketoacidotic) it will need intensive care, including intravenous fluids and special insulin while in hospital. Good glucose control requires changes to diet and injections of insulin (usually twice daily). We routinely use Glargine insulin in cats and Caninsulin in dogs. A prescription food will be selected for your pet by one of our vets.

Insulin doses can change with age, weight gain, and diet changes. The frequency of ongoing monitoring of your pet's blood glucose and urine glucose will be recommended by your vet. Note that some cats can recover from diabetes. If a cat goes 'into remission' then insulin therapy can be stopped.

Monitoring Your Diabetic Pet at Home

If you notice any depression, lethargy, weakness or an increase in water consumption you should call us. Our vet can show you how to monitor glucose and ketone readings in the urine at home if you like.

Quality. Care. Compassion.

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