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DIABETES

As a pet owner, receiving a diagnosis of diabetes for your furry friend can be overwhelming and stressful. It is natural to have many questions and concerns about how to care for a diabetic pet. However, with proper management and care, pets with diabetes can live happy and healthy lives. This handout will discuss what diabetes is, the symptoms of unregulated diabetes, how to manage diabetes in pets, and the importance of regular veterinary care.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels. When a dog has diabetes, their body is unable to produce or properly use insulin, which is a hormone that helps to regulate glucose levels in the blood. This can lead to high blood sugar levels, known as **hyperglycemia**, which can cause a range of health problems.

One of the most common symptoms of diabetes in dogs is **increased thirst and urination**. Your dog may start drinking more water than usual and may need to go outside to urinate more frequently. Additionally, you may notice that your dog is **losing weight** despite an increase in appetite. Other symptoms of diabetes in dogs may include **lethargy, weakness, and vomiting**.

The first step in managing your dog's diabetes is to work closely with your veterinarian. Your vet will likely recommend a specialized diet that is low in carbohydrates and high in fiber, which can help to regulate your dog's blood sugar levels. Additionally, **you will need to give your pet insulin injections to help regulate their blood sugar levels**. These injections are given **twice a day, either while or after your pet is eating**.

It is important to follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully when administering insulin and to monitor your dog's response to the insulin. When a pet is well regulated, many of the symptoms that lead to the diagnosis of diabetes will subside. If you notice your pet is still drinking and urinating excessively, or if these symptoms return, there's a good chance your vet will need to adjust their insulin dose.

Diabetics also risk **hypoglycemia**, where their blood sugar becomes too LOW instead of too high. The symptoms of hypoglycemia can range from **overall weakness to full on seizures**. If you think your pet's glucose is low, it can become a medical emergency if it isn't addressed. When this happens, we typically recommend a small amount of Karosyrup on the gums, to help elevate their blood sugar. Because insulin can drive blood sugar down, it's advised to cut the dose in half if your pet has not eaten their meal. If they are not eating by their next meal, skip the insulin and call your veterinarian.

New diabetic patients may need several **glucose curves** to find the "sweet spot" for insulin dosing. Glucose curves are done in the clinic, over the course of the whole day. This allows your veterinarian to visualize how your pet is responding throughout the day, on their current insulin dose. This can be expensive initially, but once that sweet spot is found, the need for glucose curves can be reduced to once or twice a year, depending on your veterinarian's recommendations.

In addition to managing your dog's diabetes with diet, exercise, and insulin, it is important to schedule regular veterinary check-ups. Your veterinarian will need to monitor your dog's blood sugar levels, and possibly adjust their insulin dosage if necessary, and check for any other health problems that may be related to diabetes.

In conclusion, receiving a diagnosis of diabetes for your dog can be overwhelming, but with proper management and care, your pet can live a happy and healthy life. Work closely with your veterinarian to develop a plan for managing your dog's diabetes, including diet, exercise, and insulin, and be sure to schedule regular check-ups to monitor your dog's health. With the right care, your diabetic dog can continue to bring joy and companionship to your life for years to come.



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Diabetes- Key Points

Insulin Storage & Preparation:

- **Keep in the fridge** until time to use.
- Gently mix before drawing into syringe (*roll the bottle in your hand*).
- Return bottle to fridge.
- If you purchase insulin online, and the package does not arrive cold- call the pharmacy as it may no longer be effective.

Syringes:

- Make sure you're using the right **SIZE** of syringe- in this case, size does matter.
- **U40 vs U100**- These are both common insulin syringes, but they measure the insulin amount differently. Stick with the size advised by your veterinarian, to assure proper dosing.
- Both U40 and U100 syringes come in 3 sizes : **Low dose(1/3cc), Medium dose(1/2cc), and Large dose (1cc)**. More than likely you will be using U40 Low dose, or U40 Medium dose syringes.

If your pet isn't eating:

- Call your veterinarian- **When In doubt, DON'T GIVE THE INSULIN.**
- If your pet decides to skip a meal, either skip the insulin, or administer only **HALF** of the dose.
- If your pet has skipped more than one meal- they need to be seen ASAP.

Feeding:

- Diabetics should **NOT** be free fed. It's recommended they only eat every 12 hours, to avoid spiking their glucose throughout the day.
- Diabetic Diet Options:
 - Purina DM (Cats only)
 - Hills m/d (Cats Only)
 - Hill's w/d (Dog Only)
 - Royal Canin Glycobalance (Dogs & Cats)