



Management of the Diabetic Dog

Your dog has diabetes mellitus in which his/her pancreas does not produce enough insulin to maintain normal blood sugar levels. Consequently, you must provide the insulin by giving injections, usually twice daily.

A lack of insulin results in a decreased delivery of sugar (glucose) to the cells and a rise in blood sugar (hyperglycemia). As the blood sugar increases, it eventually passes in the urine. This causes an increase in urination and subsequently increases in thirst as well as water consumption. Also, the cells decreased use of sugar leads to the breakdown of fat and muscle. Eventually this process leads to weight loss. Thus the history of virtually all diabetes cases includes increased thirst, increased urination, increased appetite and weight loss. To control these symptoms insulin must be given by injection. Almost all dogs do best with twice daily injections, twelve hours apart, and at least two daily feedings given at the time of injection. If your dog is a finicky eater and prefers multiple small meals throughout the day he/she should be allowed to continue this pattern of eating.

Unlike cats almost all diabetic dogs are insulin dependent and cannot be controlled with diet. Although “diabetic diets” are marketed for dogs, control of blood sugar can be maintained with insulin regardless of the diet fed.

Helpful Websites

www.petdiabetes.com

www.caninediabetes.org

www.k9diabetes.com

Occasional Problems Encountered

1. If you attempt to give an insulin injection and your pet gets only part of its dose due to sudden movement causing some of the insulin to be squirted onto the skin, do not attempt to approximate its dose by giving another injection. Simply wait until the next injection to give the normal amount.
2. If your pet is unable to eat after insulin is given (for example if vomiting occurs), try a small amount of chicken, tuna or beef. If vomiting persists, notify the hospital.
3. If you find it necessary to miss an occasional insulin injection it is acceptable to do so. It is not acceptable to skip a series of injections
4. Occasionally insulin treatment may result in blood sugar levels that are too low. Your pet may experience tremors or seem weak and uncoordinated. Should this occur, offer a meal of canned food. If he/she refuses the food or is unable to eat, administer sugar-containing syrup by rubbing it on the gums and inside of the lips. Do not try to force your pet to swallow the syrup. Call the hospital if your pet does not improve within a few minutes.