

Diabetes in Dogs and Cats

At **Franktown Animal Clinic**, we understand that a diabetes diagnosis can feel overwhelming. Our team is here to support you and your pet every step of the way. With proper management, diabetic pets can live long, happy lives. We are committed to providing you with the guidance and care needed to help your pet thrive.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus is a condition where the body cannot properly regulate blood sugar (glucose) due to insufficient insulin production or ineffective use of insulin. Insulin is essential for allowing glucose to enter cells for energy. Without it, blood sugar levels become dangerously high.

Diabetes Mellitus and Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)

- **Diabetes Mellitus (DM):** The most common form of diabetes in pets, characterized by persistently high blood sugar levels requiring insulin therapy.
- **Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA):** A serious and life-threatening complication of untreated or poorly managed diabetes. In DKA, the body breaks down fat for energy, leading to the buildup of acids (ketones) in the blood. Symptoms of DKA include vomiting, weakness, rapid breathing, and lethargy. This requires immediate veterinary care.

Is There a Difference Between Diabetes in Dogs and Cats?

Yes. In dogs, diabetes is most similar to Type 1 diabetes in humans, where the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. This means that lifelong insulin therapy is required.

In cats, diabetes more closely resembles Type 2 diabetes in humans, where insulin resistance develops. With proper treatment and management, some cats can go into remission and no longer require insulin.

What Are the Symptoms of Diabetes?

- Increased thirst and urination
- Increased appetite with weight loss
- Lethargy or weakness
- Cloudy eyes (more common in dogs)
- Poor coat condition (more common in cats)
- Urinary tract infections

What Can You Do at Home to Help?

- Monitor your pet's drinking, urination, and appetite
- Keep a consistent feeding schedule with a veterinarian-approved diet
- Administer prescribed insulin correctly and on schedule
- Maintain a healthy weight for your pet
- Watch for signs of low blood sugar (weakness, tremors, or seizures)

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How is Diabetes Diagnosed?

Diagnosis involves:

- **Bloodwork:** Elevated blood glucose levels
- **Urinalysis:** Glucose present in the urine
- **Fructosamine Test:** Measures long-term blood sugar levels

How is Diabetes Usually Treated?

- **Insulin therapy:** Given as injections under the skin
- **Dietary management:** Specialized diets may help stabilize blood sugar
- **Weight management:** Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial
- **Routine blood sugar monitoring:** May be done at home or in the clinic

What's Next if Your Pet is Diagnosed with Diabetes?

- **Frequent vet visits at first:** To ensure proper insulin dosing
- **Home glucose monitoring:** May be recommended to track blood sugar trends
- **Future diagnostics:** Routine bloodwork and urinalysis to monitor overall health
- **Adjustments to treatment:** Insulin doses may need modification over time
- **Long-term management:** With proper care, diabetic pets can live happy, healthy lives

If you suspect your pet may have diabetes, please contact us.

Franktown Animal Clinic

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