

UNDERSTANDING DIABETES MELLITUS

keep this page for future reference

Overview/What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which there is not enough/or no insulin production. Insulin is a necessary hormone excreted by the pancreas. It aids in glucose absorption to fuel cells for normal body function; insulin is essential for the body to use the glucose that is already present in the blood stream. When insulin is lacking, the cells can not accept glucose from the blood stream, and therefore the body goes in to "starvation mode".

Main Symptoms associated with Diabetes:

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Increased eating
- Weight Loss
- Vomiting
- Depression

Where can I buy supplies?

Any pharmacy carries diabetes supplies. A prescription is not usually necessary for these items, but if your pharmacy of choice requires one, let us know and we will be happy to provide it. Some pharmacies will request a prescription for needles/syringes when not purchased with insulin. Try to buy your supplies at the same time to avoid this.

What kind of insulin do I purchase?

There are many types of insulin. We recommend you use NPH, or Humulin N insulin. It should come in a 10 mL vial.

What kind of syringes do I purchase?

Buy U100 syringes with 29 gauge x ½" or 1" needle. Ask a pharmacy technician if you are having trouble finding any of these items.

How do I store my supplies?

Needles/syringes should be stored in a safe place away from children and pets. Insulin should be kept in the refrigerator.

How do I dispose of the empty insulin bottle and used syringes?

You can throw the empty bottle in to your regular trash, or put it in to the Sharps container you purchased through us. All used needles should be placed in to the Sharps container immediately after use. Bring your full Sharps container to our office so we can dispose of it properly for you.

When should I give the insulin injection?

Insulin is typically given twice daily, at 12 hour intervals. It can also be given once daily, as directed by your pet's doctor. Always follow dosing instructions and do not change them without first consulting your doctor. **Insulin should only be given if you pet is eating normally.** If you give insulin when your pet is not eating consistently, you will reduce their blood glucose level causing a possible medical emergency.

Always mix insulin by rolling it in between your hands before administering it. Do not shake the bottle; this will destroy the cells in the insulin itself, rendering it useless.

How will I know if my pet's glucose is too high or too low?

There will be changes in your pet's behavior, such as excessive eating, excessive drinking, increase urinations, lethargy, weight loss, depression and/or vomiting. These are all signs that your pet's condition is not well controlled, or has changed. Call our office immediately to schedule an appointment.

If you suspect your pet's glucose level is too low (extreme lethargy):

Give an oral glucose stimulant, such as Karo Syrup. You should give 1 tablespoon per 10 pounds of body weight.

How often should I have my pet's blood glucose checked?

Once every 4 months is recommended as long as you feel that your pet is acting normally. If you notice a change in your pet's behavior, you should have a BG check done as soon as possible. **Never alter your pet's insulin dose without consulting with his/her doctor.** Doses are based on weight and adjusted by your pet's glucose curve that was done in the hospital.

Should I change his/her diet?

We recommend feeding a prescription diet such as M/D for cats and W/D for dogs. If your pet is not interested in the new food, or you do not want to change diets, it is ok to keep your pet on his/her regular food. We would definitely suggest that you change and/or reduce the amount and type of treats your pet receives.

Although we do not advocate table scraps, you can use some human food as treats. Fruits, such as apples and bananas are good choices. Some animals will even eat

vegetables like green beans and carrots. These should be in addition to their normal diet, and in place of high calorie treats.

How do I administer insulin?

Insulin is given subcutaneously, which means under the skin. It is NOT given in to a vein or in to muscle. It can be given anywhere your pet has "extra" or loose skin, as you will need to raise or pull up (tent) the skin to give the injection. Your pet's doctor or technician can show you how to give insulin properly.

These are the steps to follow:

1. Roll insulin in hands to mix. *Do not shake.*
2. Draw up dose of insulin into appropriate syringe (U100, unless otherwise discussed).
3. "Tent" skin where you are giving insulin.
4. Insert full length of the needle into the raised skin.
5. Draw back slightly on the plunger of the syringe to ensure you have not hit a vein. If you did, a red tinge (blood) would show at the base of the needle. If this happens, pull the entire needle out and try again. If nothing shows up after pulling back, you are ok to push the full dose of insulin under the skin.
6. Remove the needle from the skin and dispose of properly.

For urgent questions, issues or to schedule an appointment, call our Lexington office at (419)884-1074 or Bellville at (419) 886-4733. You can also email info@appleseedvalleyvet.com for non-urgent concerns