

should immediately be offered its normal food. If the cat is unable to eat, rub some corn syrup onto the gums or, if the cat can swallow, slowly administer it by syringe into the mouth. **Never force fingers, food, or fluids into the mouth of a convulsing or comatose cat.** Contact your veterinarian immediately for further instructions if your cat exhibits signs of hypoglycemia.

How do I monitor my diabetic pet?

Monitoring your diabetic cat is a joint effort between you and your veterinarian. Because your cat's insulin requirements may change over time, periodic checking of blood glucose or serum fructosamine levels is essential. **Seek veterinary treatment at the first reappearance of diabetes signs (increased thirst, increased weight loss, increased appetite, or increased urination).**

Some cat owners are willing and able to take on the task of measuring their cat's blood glucose levels at home rather than in a veterinary hospital—a potentially less expensive and more accurate monitoring method. Ask your veterinarian whether home glucose testing might be suitable for you and your cat. More information can be found online at www.sugarcats.net/sites/harry/bgtest.htm.

At home, you'll need to be constantly aware of your cat's appetite, weight, water consumption, and urine output. It is important to feed a consistent amount and type of food at the same times each day, so that you can be aware of days that your cat either does not eat or is unusually hungry after the feeding. Additionally, since water consumption is highly variable from one cat to another, monitoring your cat's water consumption for a few weeks will allow you to establish what is normal for your cat. Urine output can be roughly estimated by determining the amount of litter that is scooped out of the litter box. This is less accurate if more than one cat uses the litter box, but changes can still be meaningful. Any significant variation in your cat's food intake, weight, water intake, or urine output can be a sign that the diabetes is recurring and immediate veterinary care is needed.

What is the prognosis for a diabetic cat?

There is no cure for diabetes mellitus. However, some diabetic cats may lose the need for insulin, months or years after diagnosis. If diabetes has resulted from obesity, it is likely to improve a great deal—or even completely resolve—once the cat's weight is under control. If obesity or some other disorder is not a factor, the diabetes probably will not go away; however, it can be successfully managed. The serious chronic complications that afflict people with diabetes mellitus (such as kidney disease, blood vessel disease, and coronary artery disease) are uncommon in diabetic cats. Once control is attained with proper treatment and home care, a diabetic cat can live many healthy years. Nonetheless, successfully managing a diabetic cat requires much dedication and communication between you and your veterinarian.

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This brochure was prepared by the American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University, College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, New York 14853-6401. The center is committed to improving the health of cats by developing methods to prevent or cure feline diseases and by providing continuing education to veterinarians and cat owners. Much of that work is made possible by the financial support of friends. ©2002 by Cornell University. All rights reserved. Cornell University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer.

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