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Diabetes advice sheet.

Your pet has been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus. Diabetes is a life long condition. Having diabetes means that your pet is insulin deficient. Insulin is one of the hormones in the body that controls blood glucose (more commonly known as blood sugar) levels. Insulin lowers the blood glucose levels by helping the body's cells take up glucose from the blood and use it for their many functions. In diabetic animals the blood glucose levels are consistently high as there isn't the insulin present to keep them controlled.

Diabetes has to be managed with regular insulin injections, a controlled diet and exercise regime.

There are a few different insulin preparations available and your vet will decide which will be most appropriate for your pet. The different insulin preparations require different syringes to ensure that the correct dose is being given. Please make sure that you use the same syringes each time, if you are unsure please contact the practice.

Treatment.

Your vet has chosen insulin for your pet. The starting dose isunits once/twice daily. We recommend that you feed your pet and give the insulin injection either whilst they are eating or just after a meal. If your pet doesn't eat we recommend that you halve the insulin dose and call the practice for further advice. If you forget to give an insulin injection and remember within a couple of hours you can give the insulin dose as normal. If more than a couple of hours have elapsed wait until the next insulin dose is due and continue as normal from there.

Insulin use.

Insulin must be stored in the fridge at all times, it must not be allowed to freeze. Once opened insulin has a shelf life of 28days if stored correctly, therefore ideally a new bottle of insulin is required each month.

Just before use rock the insulin bottle gently, do not shake (shaking destroys the insulin). Use a new syringe for each insulin injection. Tip the insulin bottle upside down and take the cap off the needle. Insert the needle into the insulin bottle and draw up slightly more insulin than you need.

Expel any air bubbles by tapping the syringe gently with your finger. Press the plunger until the correct insulin dose remains in the syringe.

Pull the skin of the scruff upward to make a tent like shape. Insert the needle at right angles gently through the skin. Gently draw back the plunger and if blood appears remove the needle and repeat the above in a different place. If no blood appears gently depress the plunger to expel all the contents of the syringe.

Dispose of the needle and syringe in a sealed container and bring to the practice for disposal. Don't throw needles away with household waste. Don't re-use a syringe and needle, always use a fresh one.

Monitoring at the practice.

Each animal's insulin requirement is different and will change. Your pet will need to be seen fairly frequently initially after diagnosis to monitor their condition. Once stabilized your pet will need a check up at least every 6 months. A blood test may be performed at the check up. Your vet will be able to advise you on when your pet's next check up is due.

Your vet will perform one of two blood tests to see how well their diabetes is being controlled.

- The first of these tests is a blood glucose curve. Your pet will need to stay in the practice for the day for this test. Please ask your vet as to whether they would like you to feed and give the morning's insulin at home or bring it with you to the practice. Throughout the day they will have blood samples taken at 2 hourly intervals and the glucose concentration will be measured and recorded. We are able to prick their ear and take a very small spot of blood for this test. This minimizes any discomfort from repeated blood sampling. Using these measurements your vet will be able to see how well controlled their diabetes is and ask you to alter the insulin dose accordingly.
- The second of these tests is called a fructosamine blood test. Fructosamine is the long term glucose storage compound in the blood. The fructosamine value will tell your vet how well the diabetes has been controlled over the previous couple of weeks. Your pet will only need a routine appointment for this test.

Your vet will let you know which test they would like to perform and when.

Monitoring and management at home.

It is important that your pet has a regular diet and exercise regime that doesn't change. This will ensure that her diabetes will be more easily controlled. Changing the diet or amount of exercise that your pet does will also change the insulin requirements and hence lead to poor control of the diabetes. Your pet must have the same amount of food at each meal and ideally must not snack in between. With dogs it is important that they go for the same length of walk each day. It is important not to go for a 20min walk around the block during the week and a 3 hour walk at the weekend as this will significantly affect their diabetic control.

Cats

The diet that we recommend for your cat is Royal Canin Diabetic food. This food has been specially designed for the diabetic cat. Your vet may recommend Royal Canin Obesity if your cat is overweight and diabetic. This food has been specially designed to help your pet reach its' ideal bodyweight and like the diabetic food provides a controlled glucose supply.

Dogs

The diet we recommend for your dog is Royal Canin weight control. This diet has been specially designed for diabetic dogs and provides a constant controlled glucose supply. Your vet may also recommend either Royal Canin Obesity or Satiety diet if appropriate.

Please talk to your vet if you are unsure about «Animal_Name»'s diet. It may be advisable not to change her diet due to other medical reasons.

Hypoglycaemia.

Hypoglycaemia is when the blood glucose level drops too low. The signs you may notice include

- Lethargy (tiredness)
- Weakness
- shivering/muscle twitching
- fits/seizures
- unconsciousness

If you notice any of these signs please rub either honey or a sugary solution onto their gums and contact the practice for further advice. **Don't give any insulin.** Encourage them to eat if they are able to do so.

Hyperglycaemia/uncontrolled diabetes.

Hyperglycaemia occurs when the blood glucose level is too high. You will notice the signs similar to those prior to diabetes being diagnosed. These include

- drinking more
- urinating more
- eating more
- exercise intolerance
- recurrent infections
- cataracts developing.

If you notice any of these signs contact the practice as an adjustment to their insulin dose may be required.

Key points.

- Use a fresh needle for each insulin injection.
- Keep the insulin in the fridge.
- If you think your pet is hypoglycaemic encourage them to eat or rub honey or a sugary solution on their gums-take care not to get bitten. Call the practice for advice.
- If you think your pet is hyperglycaemic call the practice to make an appointment for your pet to be checked, don't alter the insulin dose at home.