

OCTOBER 2023



# SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Cat Diabetes*

*Online Store Promotions*



## CAT DIABETES: SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT

With pet obesity on the rise, it may come as no surprise that cases of diabetes in pets are also on the rise. According to the annual State of Pet Health report released by Banfield Pet Hospital, the prevalence of cat diabetes has risen over 18 percent between 2006 and 2015. Although obesity is the biggest risk factor for developing feline diabetes, it's not the only one. Even if your cat isn't obese, it's important to be able to recognize the clinical signs of diabetes so that treatment can begin as soon as possible. Keep reading to find out what you need to know about recognizing and managing diabetes in your kitty.

(Continued on next page)



# CAT DIABETES: SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT (CONTINUED)

## What Is Cat Diabetes?

Large striped cat with green eyes lying on bed. Like humans, cats can develop diabetes mellitus, also known as sugar diabetes, a disease that occurs when the body can no longer produce or use insulin properly, says Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, controls the flow of blood sugar, called glucose, to the body's cells to provide energy. Without sufficient levels of insulin, glucose doesn't reach the cells like it should, so instead the body starts breaking down fat and protein cells to use for energy, while unused glucose builds up to excessive amounts in the bloodstream.

As with humans, there are two types of feline diabetes — insulin dependent, or type I, in which the body is no longer capable of producing any insulin, and non-insulin dependent, or type II, in which either the body can't produce sufficient amounts of insulin, or the organs and tissues have become insulin-resistant, meaning that they need higher-than-normal amounts of insulin in order to properly process glucose. Occurrences of type I diabetes in cats is rare, says VCA Hospitals.

## How Do Cats Develop Diabetes?

While the exact cause of cat diabetes is unknown, obese cats are the most predisposed to developing this disease. Other risk factors include chronic pancreatitis and hormonal disorders such as hyperthyroidism and Cushing's disease. Certain medications, including corticosteroids (such as prednisolone) have also been linked to diabetes. Male cats also tend to be more prone to this condition than females.

## Health Implications of Feline Diabetes

Because diabetes causes the body's cells to process energy from fat and protein instead of glucose, cats with diabetes will typically lose weight in spite of displaying a healthy appetite. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to a number of health complications, the most dangerous of which is a condition known as ketoacidosis. This occurs when the breakdown of fat and protein cells becomes so great that your cat's body is effectively starving even though she's eating regularly. Signs of this condition include appetite loss, weakness or lethargy, abnormal breathing, dehydration, vomiting and diarrhea, and without immediate intensive care to provide fluids and insulin, it could be fatal.

Other diabetes-related health complications may include liver disease, bacterial infection, unhealthy skin and coat, and neuropathy, which can cause loss of strength and mobility in the hind legs. Another complication can arise from treatment of diabetes — hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, can occur when too much insulin is given, resulting in weakness, listlessness and lack of coordination, and in some cases it can cause convulsions and even coma. If your diabetic kitty displays signs of low blood sugar, try to get her to eat something. If she won't or can't eat, Cornell recommends rubbing syrup on her gums and

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# CAT DIABETES: SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT (CONTINUED)

## Signs and Symptoms

A diabetic cat will typically display a combination of these four classic signs:

1. Increased appetite
2. Weight loss
3. Excessive thirst
4. Increased urination

Excessive thirst and frequent urination are the signs most likely to be noticed first by cat owners. Often, because they need to go so frequently, diabetic cats will start relieving themselves outside the litter box. For this reason, it's highly recommended to see your vet if your kitty seems to forget her litter box training.

## Treatment of Cat Diabetes

Unfortunately, there is no known cure for cat diabetes. Treatment is focused on managing the illness and typically involves insulin injections. Most diabetic cats require daily insulin injections to manage the illness, which your vet can train you to provide at home. Schedule regular checkups to monitor your cat's blood sugar and her response to the treatment.

If obesity is a factor, you'll also need to make changes to your cat's meals. Two different types of meal plans have been shown to help control both weight and blood sugar in diabetic cats. One is a meal plan that's high in fiber and complex carbohydrates. The other is a low-carbohydrate, high-protein plan. Your vet might place your kitty on a prescription food for diabetes, but determining which one is right for your cat might require some experimentation.

No matter what form your kitty's treatment takes, you'll need to closely monitor your pet, keeping track of her appetite and how often she drinks water and urinates, as well as keeping an eye out for signs of complications. If you're willing, you might also be able to monitor your cat's blood sugar with a home glucose testing kit rather than taking her to the vet every time she needs to be checked. Talk to your vet about your options if you think you and your kitty might be good candidates for home testing.

While cat diabetes is a lifelong condition, it is by no means doesn't mean your cat can't live a fulfilling life. With proper management and treatment, cats with diabetes can live long and happy lives. So if your cat shows any symptoms of diabetes, we highly recommend a visit to your vet to determine the best course of action. The sooner it can be diagnosed and treated, the better it will turn out for your precious pet.

***“In ancient times cats were worshipped as gods; they have not forgotten this.” - Terry Pratchett***

## ACOC Birthdays

**Lisa 10/2  
Jada 10/13  
Belinda 10/28**

