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### **When your pet has Diabetes mellitus**

Your pet has developed a disease called *Diabetes mellitus* – a condition where the pancreas is not secreting enough insulin to maintain normal body functions. Think of insulin as the shuttle that carries digested food into the cells of the body for nourishment. When there is a lack of insulin, the “energy” our pet’s body needs, is excreted (that is why a common sign of Diabetes is increased urination and thirst). When cells within our pet’s body are not receiving the nutrition ingested, our pet and our pet’s cells have the feeling of always being hungry (that is why another common sign of Diabetes is weight loss). When you pet has Diabetes, an external source like you, must provide insulin via injections twice a day (every 12 hours, with meals). In as little as 48 hours or less, a pet that does not receive insulin when needed can develop a potentially fatal complication called Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA). Unregulated diabetics with DKA are often in pain and hospitalized with a guarded prognosis. Having a pet with Diabetes requires a big commitment in order to properly manage this condition but it can be done and we’re here to help!

Insulin needs to be kept refrigerated and should be gently inverted or rolled between your hands prior to use (it should never be shaken). Because the insulin molecule loses its potency, the bottle should be discarded 3 months after the rubber seal is first punctured - this is regardless of the expiration date. The injection must be given subcutaneously (under the skin). Proper technique will be demonstrated by your veterinarian or veterinary nurse – it may be easier than you think! Used needles must be disposed of properly in accordance with local laws.

- The amount of insulin given at each injection may be changed based on results of blood tests done at the hospital. You should wait until after your pet consumes at least 50% of his/her meal. If less than half of the meal is eaten, only give half of the normal insulin dose. If less than half a meal is eaten for two meals in a row, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.
- If you give an injection, but your pet only receives part of it (due to movement or poor cooperation), do not attempt to estimate the amount of insulin lost. Just wait until the next dose is due and administer the dose carefully as if nothing was off about the dose prior.

- Because the insulin injections are not as dynamic as the body's normal natural ability to regulate blood sugar, you must try to ensure that the daily routine remains the same from day to day. This includes feeding times, level of activity, play times, and any other stressors in your pet's life. Since their body can't respond by increasing or decreasing insulin levels, the daily activity/stress must remain as similar as possible from day to day.
- Although infrequent in adult dogs, your pet may experience low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). The signs of low blood sugar often mimic a drunken state. Signs of hypoglycemia include, but are not limited to, weakness, wobbling, and a general lack of coordination. If this occurs, immediately feed your pet some of his/her food. If he/she is unable to eat, give Karo (or maple) Syrup orally (about 1 Tablespoon per 30lbs). Any incident like this should be reported to your veterinarian. If there is no improvement in response to the food or Karo/maple Syrup, seek emergency veterinary attention immediately.
- A special diet may be recommended based on your pet's specific needs. The best foods will have less carbohydrates and slightly more fiber. Remember to feed a pre-measured amount of food before with each insulin injection.

**Type of insulin:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Give** \_\_\_\_\_ **units under the skin every 12 hours with meals.**

**Type of food:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Feed normal amount every 12 hours**

**Next follow up:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Always make sure your insulin matches your needles. For example, U-40 insulin must always be given with U-40 needles. U-100 insulin must always be given with U-100 needles. They are NOT interchangeable.**

## **Quick Reference Page**

**AM Meal** = eats = give insulin  
\_\_\_\_\_ units Insulin under the skin  
(If doesn't eat: **NO** units)

**PM Meal** = eats = give insulin  
\_\_\_\_\_ units Insulin under the skin  
(If doesn't eat: **NO** units)

### **Important things to remember:**

1. Insulin must be refrigerated
2. Insulin must be ROLLED GENTLY between the hands - never shake it!
3. Insulin must be given IMMEDIATELY while/just after eating
4. Get a new bottle of insulin every 3 months
5. NO SNACKS, NO TREATS in between AM & PM meals
6. If pet ever appears drunk (stumbling, wobbly, etc.) – give Karo Syrup or maple syrup by mouth and call Levittown Animal Hospital
7. If pet does not eat 2 meals in a row, call us at (516) 796-2266!

