



Just like humans, dogs can also suffer from diabetes. It is important to understand your dog's particular dietary requirements to ensure they live a long and healthy life.



TIP

Collecting information about your dogs diet, water intake and bathroom habits can help you identify diabetes early in your dog.

Need more advice?

Frank Samways Vet, at the The Lost Dogs Home will be able to assist in providing the best care for your pet.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is caused by deficiency of insulin which is an important hormone made by beta cells in the pancreas. The signs of diabetes in dogs are typically weight loss despite a good appetite, excessive thirst and urination.

HOW IS DIABETES TREATED IN DOGS?

Treatment of diabetes in dogs usually requires daily administration of insulin injections and appropriate nutrition. It must be specifically tailored for each individual animal. The goal is to control the signs of diabetes (see above) and to avoid low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) due to insulin overdose. The best outcome tends to be achieved when the owner of the diabetic pet and their veterinarian work together as a team.

WHAT IS DIABETIC REMISSION?

Diabetic remission is a period of time when a diabetic animal does not require insulin injections to control the signs of diabetes

WHAT COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED AT HOME WHEN TREATING A DIABETIC DOG?

Insulin injections are typically administered by the owner to a diabetic pet every 12 hours. It is very important that injections are given at the exact time that they are due. If it is ever not possible to give an insulin injection on time then it is better to miss that particular injection than to give it at another time.

Appropriate nutritional strategies can complement insulin therapy in diabetic cats and so it is often beneficial to make changes to the diet or feeding regimen.

Information collected at home about a diabetic dog's progress helps to monitor the success of treatment and can provide clues about the risk of hypoglycaemia.

The most useful information comes from routine recording of general demeanor, daily water intake, changes in body weight, and the presence or absence of glucose in the urine.

COLLECTING IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DIABETIC DOG

1. **Appetite, general demeanor and behaviour:** this should be recorded every day.
2. **Meal amount and composition:** should also be recorded every day.
3. **Insulin dose:** this should be recorded twice each day.
4. **Water intake:** this should be measured at least once each week. The key is to determine how many milliliters of water your dog drinks over a known number of hours. For example, a measured volume of water can be provided in a bowl and access to other water sources should be prevented. The volume of water remaining in the bowl can then be measured after 24 hours. If there is more than one pet drinking from the same water bowl, it is useful to measure the volume of water drunk by all the animals. The diabetic dog typically is the reason for most of the variation in water drunk in multi-pet households.
5. **Urine glucose and ketones** should be measured at least once each week. The urine can be tested with test strips called Ketodiastix and a record kept of the results. Diabetic dogs will often need a bit of gentle encouragement to become accustomed to their owner approaching them when they are urinating. However, most will come to readily accept urine collection.
6. **Body weight:** ideally, a diabetic dog's body weight should be recorded once each week. It is important to use the same scales each time the dog is weighed. Scales designed for weighing adult humans are not suitable for small dogs. Scales designed for babies are a suitable option.

ADVANTAGES OF USING AN INSULIN DOSING PEN

Insulin dosing pens are designed for use by people with no medical training. They are easy to use, more accurate and precise for dose measurement, and are less painful for the patient. Insulin dosing pens for diabetic dogs are reuseable and so the only ongoing costs are for the pen tips (needles) and the insulin cartridges. In many cases, these ongoing costs are less than for standard insulin, syringes, and needles.

Insulin dosing pens can administer doses in 0.5 unit increments and so a diabetic dog might, for example, be accurately given 5.5, 6.0, or 6.5 units of insulin according to its needs. Insulin dosing pens are designed to work with specific insulin preparations and so it is sometimes necessary for a diabetic dog to be changed to a different insulin preparation when changing from syringes and needles to a dosing pen.

The technique for administering insulin using a dosing pen is quite different to that for syringes and needles and so an introductory training session is required before using a pen at home.

FEEDING YOUR DOG

A key to successful management of diabetes in dogs is the feeding of consistent meals at the time of insulin injections that always contain exactly the same ingredients and quantities of those ingredients. This is because the insulin dose needs to be matched with the dog's meals.

It is important that meals are fed at the time of insulin injections and that all food must be consumed within 4 hours. No extra food should be fed to the dog 4 or more hours after an insulin injection.

Different flavours of the same brand of dog food may be associated with different insulin requirements, therefore it is important to choose a flavour that is always available.

Lack of appetite typically indicates illness in a diabetic dog and prompt veterinary examination is recommended.

If you have noticed any change in your pet's behaviour or eating patterns, it is important that you contact your vet or the team at Frank Samways Vet on (03) 8379 4498 or vetclinic@dogshome.com



2 Gracie Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051 Phone
03 9329-2755

920 Thompsons Rd Cranbourne
VIC 3977 Phone 03 9702-8055

Web www.dogshome.com Email
info@dogshome.com Facebook
lostdogshome Twitter
lostdogshome Insta
[@lostdogshome](https://www.instagram.com/lostdogshome)

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We rely on public support to run services and programs, including: proactive adoption, foster care, behaviour rehabilitation, low cost desexing and microchipping, and the promotion of better pet ownership through education.