

Feline diabetes and insulin therapy

Feline diabetes, also termed diabetes mellitus, is a condition causing an imbalance of insulin in the body. Insulin is a hormone that is used to regulate the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Diabetes is when the body doesn't produce enough insulin or cannot use it correctly. This can cause complications with weight management and water intake short term. If left untreated, skin and urinary tract infections may occur, along with increased risk of pancreatitis and liver problems.

Clinical signs

Clinical presentation of diabetes in cats can be shown as:

- Weight loss
- Increased appetite
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination

Monitoring your cat's weight regularly is helpful to identify changes. Making note of how much your cat is eating and drinking can also be a useful start. We understand measuring urine output for outdoor cats can be difficult.

Although weight loss is a symptom, overweight cats are 4 times as likely to develop diabetes. Making sure your cat has a healthy diet that is high in protein and low in carbohydrates can act as a preventative measure.

Diagnosis:

Diagnosis usually involves taking bloods for testing and urine for analysis. A specific blood test for fructosamine levels is used and the amount of glucose in the urine is measured. If these results are high, it is indicative of diabetes.

A 'glucose curve' can also be performed at home or in practice with the use of a portable glucose reader which uses a fine needle to take a small amount of blood. Samples can be taken throughout the day to find out more about the body's reaction to glucose. Results from this are used to determine dosage of insulin if needed.

If your cat is showing any of these symptoms and you have any concerns, feel free to book a consultation with one of our vets.

Treatment begins by removing predisposed factors that may contribute to the condition. This includes potential preexisting medications and diet changes.

☐ Weight control

☐ Oral medication

☐ Insulin injections

☐ Diet (Diabetic specific, weight loss or low carbohydrates)

Insulin therapy- treatment involves insulin injections to replace what is unable to be produced or oral medications which both reduce the amount of glucose in the blood. Insulin injections would be required twice a day, roughly 12 hours apart. The timings of these injections are important as it means the body can manage glucose at a continuous rate. They should be given immediately after mealtimes (morning and evening). The dosage is also very important as small changes can have a large effect. Dosing should never be altered without first discussing with a vet as this can be very dangerous.

The injections are easy to administer and use a very fine needle. The injections are given under the skin, which is not painful for the cat. Most cases respond to this well once the correct insulin dose is achieved.



For further details please contact
us:

01580 763303

Info@herondenvets.co.uk

Heronden Veterinary Practice
Unit 3, PickHill Business Center
Small Hythe Road
Tenterden, Kent
TN30 7LZ