

DIABETES MELLITUS

Diabetes mellitus is a condition that is associated with a lack of insulin produced by the pancreas. Insulin is a hormone that the body uses to help metabolize blood sugar.

There are two types of diabetes mellitus in dogs and cats-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus and non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. The most common form of diabetes in the dog and cat is insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

In dogs and cats the cause of diabetes can be difficult to determine. A decrease in insulin is the result of damage to the pancreatic cells that secrete insulin. Causes may include genetics, immune-mediated destruction of insulin secreting cells, and pancreatitis.

Overweight, older animals are more prone to develop diabetes. Some signs associated with diabetes include increased thirst and urination, weight loss, weakness, lethargy, and vomiting. Cataracts can occur in dogs that can cause blindness.

Diabetes can be diagnosed with blood work to check blood sugar levels and a urinalysis to check for glucose and ketones in the urine.

Treatment of diabetes can include diet changes, daily insulin injections, exercise therapy, and oral hypoglycemic drugs. The objective of treatment is to eliminate the clinical signs of diabetes mellitus. Owner observation is important in conjunction with monitoring blood glucose levels and physical exams to tell us whether a pet's blood sugar is regulated.