



Client Resources

Responses to common cat caregiver questions

What if I miss an injection?

Missing an injection is not dangerous if it does not happen often, but it is never recommended to miss more than 24 hours of insulin at a time.

What if I cannot give the injection at the proper time?

If you cannot give the injection within 2 hrs of the regularly scheduled time, it is all right to skip that dose, assuming this does not happen frequently. If you anticipate this happening, or it starts to happen often, contact your veterinarian to discuss different options for your cat.

What if I am not sure I gave the full injection?

If you are not sure that you have given an injection properly, it is better to miss an injection than to give more which could cause an accidental overdose.

What if I gave too much insulin?

Monitor for signs of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) which include extreme lethargy (weakness or lack of energy), muscle twitches or trembling, loss of appetite, or unusual behavior. Offer food throughout the day and call your veterinarian immediately. Your veterinarian will consider and discuss monitoring your cat in the clinic if you are unable to observe your cat for at least 8 hours.

What will happen if I don't treat the diabetes?

Most cats require diet and insulin for proper management of diabetes mellitus as well as managing hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), monitoring electrolytes, and pain relief. When diabetes goes untreated, you may notice increased signs and symptoms (some listed below), which can progress leading to pain, nerve damage, muscle weakness, other diseases or conditions, or even death. Some of these signs and symptoms include:

- Weight loss
- Drinking more water
- Drinking from unusual places
- Begging for food
- Decreased ability to jump
- Walking on heels instead of toes
- Lethargy
- Urine is sticky or hard to clean
- More frequent urination or urination outside of the litter box

What is hyperglycemia?

Hyperglycemia means your cat has higher than average blood sugar levels.

Can I go on vacation and leave my cat alone?

Unfortunately, no. A cat that is receiving diabetes treatment needs to be monitored. A reliable pet sitter or boarding facility capable of monitoring and giving injections is needed. Your cat cannot miss consecutive days of treatment.

What if the blood glucose values are inconsistent?

Most cats do not have reliable blood glucose curves and values can vary substantially. You will need to speak with your veterinarian to determine if other factors are causing the inconsistency such as comorbidities (other diseases or conditions), weight loss, or other factors. Your veterinarian may recommend coming in for an examination. They will also ask you to measure your cat's recent water intake and bring your daily treatment log (listing dose, blood glucose curves, administration of feeding and insulin times, any observations, food and water intake, and urine output assessment).



Client Resources *continued*

Responses to common cat caregiver questions *continued*

How does diabetes affect my cat's lifespan?

Many diabetic cats live happy and normal lives. A cat's lifespan is affected by stability of glycemic control and management of concurrent disease. Each cat is different and your veterinarian will work with you on an individualized health care plan for your cat.

Are there treatments other than insulin?

Oral hypoglycemic agents can be used but they do not reliably control diabetes in cats and they carry risk of side effects.

What if my cat needs steroid treatment along with his diabetes treatment?

Treating with corticosteroids may be required to manage concurrent disease and this can complicate glycemic control. Glycemic control and good quality of life are possible. You and your veterinarian will discuss an individualized health care plan for your cat.

How do I dispose of insulin needles?

Needles need to be disposed of properly. Your veterinary practice or local pharmacy can provide resources for proper handling and disposal of needles based on local regulations.

What if my cat won't eat a special diet?

There is evidence that higher protein, low carbohydrate diets improve diabetic control, and there are a variety of veterinary diets, kitten foods, and other commercial foods that can be used. You and your veterinarian will discuss an individualized nutrition plan for your cat.

Is it safe for my cat to go under anesthesia or have dentistry with diabetes mellitus?

With appropriate anesthesia protocols and monitoring, these procedures are safe and recommended when needed.