

# McDowall Veterinary Practice. Homecare Notes for Diabetic Dogs.

## 1. Diet:

To help to control diabetes, it is important that we feed the same amount of food every day. We will calculate the exact amount to give to your dog. It is best to feed your diabetic dog twice daily rather than allowing them to graze throughout the day. Twice daily feeding helps us to better control their calorie intake and also highlights if they are not eating and so allows us to adjust their insulin dose accordingly.

The type of food offered should be palatable and nutritionally balanced. A high quality, commercial dry food is best. Ask us for advice if you are unsure.

If your diabetic dog is overweight, we shall also be aiming to get them to lose weight, as excess fat inhibits the action of insulin. A reduced fat diet may be prescribed to help achieve your dog's ideal weight.

Please also ensure that your dog has access to adequate fresh water at all times as they may be quite thirsty initially until the diabetes is controlled.

## 2. Insulin administration:

We use a specific canine insulin called caninsulin.

**Initial Stabilisation:** We will perform the initial stabilisation process in hospital. Your dog will be admitted into hospital where we can monitor them closely and start them on twice daily insulin injections. We shall take several blood glucose readings throughout the first day to ensure that we are starting them on their correct dose. We will also ensure that they are eating well.

If your dog is unwell prior to starting insulin therapy, for example if we have diagnosed ketosis, the hospital visit may be longer and your dog may require fluid therapy to help stabilise them. They may also need a course of antibiotics as diabetes predisposes to various infections.

**Maintenance at Home:** Once we are happy that we have stabilised your dog they will go home on twice daily insulin injections.

- The insulin should be kept in the fridge.
- Once a bottle has been started it should only be used for a maximum of 3 months.
- It is important that the insulin is gently mixed ( not shaken) before drawing up each dose.
- We will show you how to draw up the insulin into the syringe. Ensure that you are only using **40 u/ml** insulin syringes. These are different to human insulin syringes obtainable from a pharmacy so only use syringes obtained from the practice to avoid confusion. Each syringe should be only used once, however for cost saving reasons I am happy for you to use a single syringe per day (i.e.: for both daily injections).
- Place all your used syringes in a yellow sharps container (ask us to order you one if you need one.) When it is full bring it in to us and we will dispose of them for you.
- We will show you where to inject the insulin under the skin. We use the loose skin around the neck region. We advise that you change the injection site on a daily basis,

- using both sides of the neck to avoid excessive scar tissue forming in a single spot.
- We advise that the insulin injections are given at 12 hour intervals, i.e.: 7am and 7pm.
  - Your dog should be fed at the same time.
  - If they haven't eaten a meal and are otherwise bright, reduce the next insulin injection by 50% and contact us.

**Weekly monitoring:** We will check your dog's progress once a week until we are happy that all is stable. We do this every *Thursday* and the routine for these checks is:

- Do not give your morning insulin dose, and bring your dog, your insulin and their morning meal into the surgery for 8am.
- We will take a preinsulin blood glucose reading and then administer the insulin and feed them.
- We will take further blood glucose measurements throughout the day as required.
- Arrange a late afternoon appointment to discuss the results with me.

We will also monitor your dogs' ongoing weight, thirst and appetite.

We would like you to *create a spreadsheet at home* and record the following daily measurements:

*Date; Insulin dose AM; Amount of food fed AM; Insulin dose PM; Amount of food fed PM; appetite; Amount of water drunk daily; Demeanour.*

Please bring the spreadsheet with you for every check.

**3.Urine testing:** Once your dog is stabilised we recommend checking the urine weekly for the presence of glucose and ketones using a test strip. We will provide the test strips for you. Keep a record of the time the sample was taken and the result on the spreadsheet.

#### **4.Exercise:**

Your dog should be maintained on his/her current level of exercise. Try to exercise at the same time every day. Avoid any sudden increase in exercise as this may result in low blood glucose.

#### **Possible Problems:**

**What do I do if my dog doesn't eat a meal?** Reduce the next insulin dose by 50% and contact us.

**What if my dog is lethargic, listless or trembling?** Rub honey on their gums, offer them some sugar water and some palatable moist food and see if they respond – they may be hypoglycaemic. Contact us immediately.

**What if my dog is starting to drink more again?** Contact us as this may indicate that they are no longer stable.

**What if my dog vomits or has diarrhoea?** Contact us immediately.