



**What is Insulin?** Sugars such as glucose are absorbed from foods and put into the blood stream as a source of energy for cells. The hormone insulin allows the glucose to be extracted from the blood and utilized in cells. It “opens the door of cells” to allow glucose in. Diabetics either don’t make enough insulin or the cells don’t respond normally to it. In an untreated diabetic, glucose circulating in blood can’t enter cells and it rises to dangerously high levels in the blood.

**HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)** If a diabetic isn’t getting enough insulin, blood glucose can rise and result in chronic disease and eventually life-threatening conditions.

**Signs of HYPERGLYCEMIA:**

- Increased drinking and urinating
- Change in appetite, often decreased/Weight loss
- Limb weakness, especially rear legs
- Cataracts/Blindness
- Plantigrade stance (“partially down in rear”)
- Depressed, obtunded, coma

**LOW BLOOD SUGAR (HYPOGLYCEMIA)** If a diabetic isn’t eating well or if too much insulin is given, blood glucose can drop to dangerously low levels. Watch for these signs which may indicate insulin doses are too high.

**Signs of HYPOGLYCEMIA:**

- Change in appetite, especially increased
- Lethargy/Easily fatigued
- Weakness/Collapse
- Tremoring/Shaking/Twitching/**Facial** twitching
- Unresponsiveness
- Seizures

## EMERGENCY CARE

Even a trained veterinarian cannot simply look at a diabetic and know if glucose is too high or too low. Trying to decide at home is even more difficult. If your diabetic pet is behaving abnormally, get to a veterinarian right away. If you’re unable to get to a vet quickly, follow these guidelines:

When in doubt, **give sugar, not insulin!!!!**

- NEVER give insulin if your pet is showing abnormal neurologic signs such as shaking, tremoring, twitching, stumbling, rolling the head back, or seizing.
- Apply Karo syrup or a sugar solution to the oral gums. Mucus membranes can absorb sugar into the blood stream without your pet having to swallow. Don’t risk choking by trying to make your pet swallow Karo.
- If signs begin to improve after the Karo, immediately feed your pet. Get to a vet.
- Do not give insulin again until a veterinarian has performed an exam and performed lab tests.
- **Diley Hill Animal Emergency Center**, 9695 Basil Western Rd, Canal Winchester **614-829-6444** open 24/7
- **Ohio State University**, 601 Vernon L. Tharp Ave, Columbus, OH **614-292-3551** open 24/7