

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DIABETES

1 in every **500** dogs and cats develops diabetes, leading to costly daily insulin injections and lifelong monitoring.



WHAT IS DIABETES

Diabetes results in excessive levels of glucose (sugar) in the bloodstream and is more common in middle-aged, neutered pets. Blood glucose levels are regulated by the production of insulin by the pancreas, so if something goes wrong with this production – or the body can no longer respond to insulin as effectively – diabetes develops.

Some breeds are predisposed:



BURMESE



BICHON FRISE

WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER

YORKSHIRE TERRIER

Veterinary practices offer weight clinics where they will assess body condition and give you advice on feeding and weight control. Special diets are available to aid this, but making changes such as cutting out extra snacks, upping the exercise and reducing excessive portions can make a big difference along with professional support and advice.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

FIRST SIGNS of diabetes are weight loss and an increased appetite and thirst.

TIP Weighing your pet routinely every few months will allow you to pick up early unexpected weight loss (or gain), and every pet should have its weight recorded when it visits the vet. A simple urine test can rule out diabetes.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS is important, especially when insulin resistance is involved, as this exhausts the pancreas. Up to **50%** of diabetic cats can come off insulin injections altogether if diagnosed promptly and treated aggressively.

TIP Ongoing weight and diet management is critical in all diabetic pets and your vet will usually prescribe a suitable diet. But just as important is keeping the food type and feeding habits consistent during diabetes management.

DIABETES can be a daunting prospect for many owners, but with the development of **user-friendly insulin pens** as an alternative to needles, and **blood-glucose monitoring devices** for easy home use, it is now easier than ever to understand, monitor and treat your pet.

TIP If diabetes is a worry, don't be afraid to ask your vet for help.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR PET maintain a healthy weight:

- Get the whole household involved and encourage good behaviour.
- To avoid accidental feeds, make one person responsible for main meals or use a tick chart.
- Always measure the food you give to your pet. Use a level scoop for accuracy when serving dry food.
- Give main meals in a feeding ball or interactive feeding toy.
- Keep a few kibbles back from the daily allowance to use as treats or rewards.
- Put a tag on your cat's collar saying 'Don't feed me!'