

SUMMER 2018



Oakwood Veterinary Hospital

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It's Kitten Season!

Dr. K.C. VanFleet

As late spring comes to a close, we are seeing an influx of new kittens in our practice. One test that the veterinarians at Oakwood will recommend we perform on your new kitten is a feline "Triple Test." This test is similar to your dog's "Heartworm Test" but is specific to 3 feline diseases that we will discuss below. It is best to perform this test at your kitten's first visit with us as it will guide our recommendations for your kitten at home.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)

There are two ways in which your kitten could be exposed to the feline leukemia virus. The first happens even before they are born, with the mother passing particles into the blood stream, into the uterus and infecting her kittens. This would result in a kitten being born with the virus. The other common way to contract this virus is by living in an environment with another FeLV positive cat. This can either be a friendly interaction such as grooming, sharing food/water dishes, or playing; but can also be fighting with another positive cat. Weeks to months after infection the virus will spread throughout the body and cause your kitten to develop a fever, enlarged lymph nodes, and decreased white blood cell counts. These signs are simply your kitten's immune system attempting to kill the virus. However, feline leukemia is such a strong virus that your kitten or cat's body cannot clear the virus and they are often infected for life. Many cats will not show any symptoms of the infection but can still progress to developing FeLV associated diseases such as infections, blood disorders, and even cancer. There are a small number of cats that are able to suppress the virus enough

that they are not showing symptoms and also not able to spread the virus to other cats.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

FIV is in the same family of viruses as human immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) however the most common method of transmission is by a deep bite wound. Other routes such as sexual contact, grooming, and between the queen and their kittens are less common but still possible. Similar to HIV and FeLV, once the cat is infected with FIV, they will remain infected for the duration of their life. This virus impairs the immune system's ability to fight off infection and cancer cells. Therefore a bacteria or virus that a normal cat's immune system would be able to fight off becomes life threatening to the FIV positive cat.

Feline Heartworm Disease

We don't typically think of heartworm disease in cats, but this nasty worm can infect our feline family members as well. When a cat becomes infected with heartworm disease, there is often only a few worms (1-7) that will survive in the cat. This can make the clinical signs of feline heartworm disease very subtle. This makes it very hard to diagnose your cat with heartworm disease from the outside. Our veterinarians at Oakwood will sometimes recommend repeating this test when your cat is older if heartworm disease is suspected.

What if my cat is positive for FIV/FeLV?

Although infrequent, we do get positive results for FIV/FeLV tests. If your kitten is positive for FIV, the doctors will recommend that we retest at 6 months of age to confirm.

Sometimes the antibodies that were passed on from your kitten's mom can cause a false positive. If your kitten is positive for FeLV on the snap test, then doctors may recommend confirmatory testing methods to definitively diagnose this infection.

Once either of these diseases are confirmed, proper management programs should be initiated. If managed correctly, positive cats can live for many years as a healthy cat. For this reason, follow the guidelines below to help ensure your cat lives a long, healthy life:

1. All positive cats should remain indoors only. This will prevent both the spread of the disease, as well as prevent other diseases (viruses and bacteria) from infecting your cat.
2. Ideally, positive cats should also be housed in a single cat family. Multi-cat households can be managed, but strict segregation is best.
3. Bi-annual examinations and bloodwork should be performed to ensure that your cat stays in perfect healthy given that their immune system is not as strong as a normal cat.
4. Internal and external parasites should also be controlled using prescription flea and tick prevention.
5. A nutritionally balanced diet should be fed, and raw diets should be avoided due to the risk of food borne illness and gastrointestinal parasites.
6. Vigilance for signs of illness, (changes in behavior, appetite, urination/ defecation, etc), is the most important aspect of management. Earlier detection of disease often correlates with better outcomes.

DIABETES: Understanding Your Pet's Diagnosis And Treatment

Article taken from: American Veterinarian

Learning that your beloved pet has diabetes can be heartbreaking, but the diagnosis doesn't mean your cat or dog cannot continue to live a happy, healthy life. While diabetes is a serious disease that cannot be ignored, successful management is possible. One key component in providing your diabetic pet with the best possible care is educating yourself. The more familiar you are with the causes of diabetes, signs of the illness, and management methods, the better equipped you will be to work with your veterinarian to achieve optimal health for your pet.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

As in humans, diabetes mellitus in pets is a chronic disease that occurs when the levels of glucose (a type of sugar) in the blood becomes elevated and unregulated due to inadequate insulin production or the body's inability to use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone, produced

by the pancreas, that helps control the body's blood sugar levels. When the body can't produce or use insulin properly, glucose remains in the blood rather than serving as an energy source for the body's cells and organs. Prolonged high blood glucose levels eventually can lead to impairment of several body organs, including the kidneys, eyes, heart, and nervous system. Diabetes is increasingly diagnosed in pets. Since 2006, canine diabetes has increased by almost 80% and feline diabetes has increased by 18%. Although there are no tests to predict whether your pet will develop diabetes, certain factors, like obesity, are commonly associated with it (see Risk Factors for Diabetes). Just as in humans, the disease is classified into 2 types. Type 1 diabetes (more common in dogs) is characterized by inadequate insulin production. Type 2 diabetes (more common in cats) is caused by insulin resistance. The pancreas still produces some insulin, but the body is unable to use it properly, so blood sugar is hard to control.

DID YOU KNOW?

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WHAT DOES DIABETES LOOK LIKE?

Veterinarians and medical researchers have compiled a list of signs commonly associated with diabetes in animals:

- *Coat deterioration:* Your pet's fur or hair may become inexplicably thinner and dry or dull; cats may stop grooming.
- *Excessive thirst:* You may notice that your pet drinks more water or drinks from places other than the water bowl.
- *Frequent urination:* Your dog may want to go outside more often and may urinate more regularly in the house. Your cat may eliminate outside the litter box.
- *Increased hunger:* Your pet never seems to get enough food even if proportions and meal timing have not changed.
- *Lethargy:* An otherwise active pet may be less energetic and enthusiastic than usual.
- *Recurring infections:* Your pet's body may be unable to properly fight off or heal from infections.
- *Weight loss:* Your pet always acts hungry but still experiences noticeable weight loss.



Some of these signs occur with other diseases as well, so it is imperative that your veterinarian conducts a thorough examination of your pet. Additionally, as animals age, they could be diagnosed with diseases that may increase the pet's risk of becoming diabetic, including thyroid disease, overactive adrenal gland, or pancreatitis. If your pet is diagnosed with any of these diseases, work with your veterinarian to understand how to detect the possible onset of diabetes. To determine whether your pet has diabetes, your veterinarian will take blood and urine samples. A diabetes diagnosis is considered definite when persistently high glucose levels are found. Once diabetes is confirmed, your veterinarian will examine your pet's overall health to ascertain the presence of other diseases or infections that may affect diabetes management.



MANAGING YOUR DIABETIC PET'S HEALTH

Although there is no cure for diabetes, the disease can be managed successfully. In fact, a cat or dog with diabetes could have the same expected life span as a nondiabetic animal. The severity of diabetes varies from pet to pet and will be affected by the pet's overall health and the presence of additional diseases or infections. Your veterinarian can work with you to develop a management regimen that is ideal for your pet. This will require commitment on your part, but is not as overwhelming as it may initially seem.



Insulin Therapy Many pets with diabetes require daily insulin injections, at least at the onset. Just as with humans, insulin formulations for animals have different absorption rates, which correlate to how frequently insulin must be administered. Your veterinarian will prescribe the appropriate formula, instruct you on how to measure insulin doses, and demonstrate how to administer the injections. Don't hesitate to ask for additional demonstrations or follow up with any questions. Any alterations to dosing or frequency should be made only by your veterinarian, regardless of how well your cat or dog appears to be responding to the medication. Pet owners administering injections also need to watch for signs of insulin overdose or underdose, both of which present as weakness, tremors, seizures, and loss of appetite. If you observe any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

DID YOU KNOW?

In dogs, females are at a greater risk to contract diabetes than male dogs. Whereas in felines, males are more likely to develop diabetes.

Also in dogs, breeds such as Toy Poodles, Terriers, Cocker Spaniels, Dachshunds, Doberman Pinschers, German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, and Golden Retrievers show above-average rates of diabetes.

Diet Pet food is the main source of glucose for your cat or dog, which is why diet is a vital part of diabetes management. Consult your veterinarian regarding the best brands for your cat or dog, as well as about portions and meal timing. The goal is to feed the right foods that will provide the energy needed without extra carbohydrates that can turn into excess sugar.

Exercise Exercise goes hand in hand with proper nutrition. Because diabetes can cause a pet to become lethargic, it's important to provide motivation to increase activity levels. This is especially significant for pets with an obesity-linked diabetes diagnosis. For dogs, this could mean longer walks (increase the length gradually) and more time playing fetch. Understandably, it can be difficult to monitor a cat's activity level, but encourage play with toys that spur your cat's natural instinct to hunt.



Glucose Monitoring Your pet's management plan may include regular blood sugar tests. Portable machines made specifically for these animals are available for home use and can be calibrated for your pet. They require a small blood sample but are created to be user-friendly. Record the results, which provide the best indication of unhealthy blood sugar fluctuations. Again, it is important to consult your veterinarian regarding what monitoring device, if any, should be used. Regular Veterinary Exams Because most diabetes management takes place at home, it's important that your pet receive routine veterinary examinations. This is especially true in the weeks immediately following the diagnosis to ensure the effectiveness of the prescribed insulin and altered diet. Pets with controlled diabetes will likely return to normal levels of thirst, appetite, urination, and activity. Their weight will stabilize, and they will be less likely to develop related complications or disease. Remember, your veterinarian is your greatest ally in managing your pet's diabetes successfully.

Urinalysis: Helping Solve Issues At Home

Paula Hock, LVT

Checking a urine sample has become a much more common practice in veterinary medicine than it used to be. The information it provides can be the first step in starting the diagnosis process in many diseases such as diabetes or kidney failure, or may explain why Fluffy has suddenly began urinating in the house.

Collection Both the amount of urine and collection method can be a factor in urinalysis. Ideally, a teaspoon of urine (5 milliliters) is more than sufficient. However, we are able to do a lot with even a few drops!

As far as collecting urine at home for dogs, we understand things may not be sterile, but cleaning a container with soap and water thoroughly before catching a sample is more than adequate.

Since cats are escape artists and masters of disguise, hiding in every corner to dodge any attempt at getting a urine sample at home, there may be times the veterinarian asks that they stay at the clinic for awhile, typically most of the day. We put plastic litter that does not absorb the urine in their box so we can then pour into the appropriate container for testing.

Keep in mind that any urine collected at

home should be put in the refrigerator or immediately brought into the clinic. Catching urine in the morning and during mid-stream of urination is preferred.

Evaluation If there is an immediate issue that needs to be addressed, we will likely run the urine in our in-house laboratory. We also have the ability to send out the urine to a laboratory that is able to evaluate things a little more thoroughly.

There are many parameters looked at when evaluating a urine sample. The first step is always gross examination. This includes the color, clarity and odor of the urine. We can tell a lot about the urine just by looking at it!

The next step involves a chemistry strip that evaluates the chemical property of the urine. This includes glucose, pH, protein, red blood cells, white blood cells, ketones, and more! This is an effective way to get an overall idea of what is going on internally, and what properties are being excreted by your furry friend.

The last and final step of our urinalysis is looking at the urine under a microscope. This helps us determine the presence of abnormal formed elements in the urine. This can include



URINALYSIS
is awesome!

red blood cells, white blood cells, crystals, bacteria, and so much more!

Diagnosis & Treatment

Everything is looked at to make a comprehensive diagnosis as to what is going on with your pet. From there, your veterinarian will come up with a treatment plan. This may include antibiotics or a prescription diet. A re-check is often necessary to make sure treatments are working. A conversation with you after treatments allows us to determine if the behavior you noticed before has improved (urinating on the carpet, frequency, etc.).

Urinalysis technology has continued to improve over time, giving us greater tools to help solve urinary issues at home. This information helps us better partner with you to make sure your pet lives the best life possible. Without this there would be more misdiagnosing and guessing at what the issue could be instead of getting to the root of the problem.

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We always accept and appreciate donations of your old blankets and towels you're no longer using! We use them to keep our patients comfortable and cozy while here in the hospital.



OAKWOOD VETERINARY HOSPITAL

924 Hastings Street
Traverse City, MI 49686

Phone: 231-941-7241

Fax: 231-941-1958

Email: info@oakwoodvethospital.com

Hours:

Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

Saturday 8am-12pm