



LIESSE ANIMAL CLINIC

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Dr. R. J. Langill ~ Serving the community since 1950

DIABETES

About Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition in which the glucose level of the blood is abnormally elevated. This is a serious condition and can lead to death in untreated cases. Most cases of diabetes are due to a deficiency of insulin.

Briefly, how is insulin produced and what does it do?

Insulin is a hormone that is produced in the pancreas. The pancreas releases insulin into the bloodstream where it functions to carry blood sugar (glucose) into the cells. The cells then use this glucose for energy. When there is a deficiency of insulin in the bloodstream, the glucose is unable to enter the cells, the blood glucose level rises, and the cells are starved of their energy source. This results in the condition called diabetes. Once the body is unable to use glucose for energy, it starts using fat and muscle tissue. When the body starts to break its own tissues down for energy, this results in metabolic breakdown products (called ketones), which circulate in the bloodstream. These ketones are toxic, and may cause mental dullness, seizures, and death.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

The classic symptoms of diabetes are increased thirst, frequent urination, increased appetite, weight loss, weakness and lethargy. In ongoing severe cases, the patient may be toxic, which is a serious condition often resulting in coma or death. Patients with diabetes also often experience secondary problems such as bladder infections, eye cataracts, kidney disease, and liver disease.

How is diabetes diagnosed?

We diagnose diabetes by a physical exam, good history, blood tests, and a urinalysis.

How is diabetes treated?

We treat diabetes with insulin injections, which are easily given by the owner to the pet, daily, at home. Special diet foods are also important in the treatment of the diabetic pet.