

Diabetes

What is it?

Diabetes is a common disease, usually affecting middle aged to older cats. Similar to the disease in humans, one of the risk factors for diabetes is obesity.

It is a condition where your cat's body doesn't produce enough insulin or doesn't respond adequately to insulin. This means that glucose (sugar) stays in the blood rather than being taken up by the body's cells, where the sugar is needed. It is the combination of excess sugar in the blood, and not enough sugar elsewhere that causes the symptoms.



What are the signs of diabetes?

- Weight loss (which can be very severe)
- Increased appetite
- Increased urination (you may find that your cat completely fills the litter tray with urine)
- Increased drinking
- Lethargy

How is it diagnosed?

Diabetes can be diagnosed by a combination of blood and urine testing which will detect abnormal glucose levels. However, this only gives us a snapshot of the blood glucose at that point in time.

Due to the fact that blood glucose will vary because of other factors, such as the cat's last meal or its stress levels, to confirm the diagnosis we need to know what the blood glucose level has been like over a period of time. A blood test performed is to check the fructosamine level. If the fructosamine level is high, this indicates that the cat has had persistently high levels of glucose in the blood.

Other blood parameters are also checked to confirm no underlying causes of high glucose, such as hyperthyroidism or kidney disease.

How's it treated?

Diabetes is treated by injecting insulin twice daily. Insulin reduces your cat's blood glucose levels by encouraging its movement into the cells. This can seem very daunting!

At Lime Trees Vets we ensure you're comfortable with the procedure of injecting by allocating time with both our vet and nurse team to provide training and support to you and your cat.

Diet modification and encouraging activity will also help in managing your cat's diabetes because it encourages stable blood glucose levels and weight loss. No more tit-bits!



What does this mean for my cat?

Although the news of your cat having diabetes can be overwhelming, cats with diabetes can live happily and with a good quality life if their diabetes is managed adequately at home.

Keeping symptoms at bay is one of the most important aspects of monitoring the diabetic cat.

Initially, regular check-ups with your veterinary team and blood tests will be necessary to achieve stable blood glucose levels. When your cat's blood glucose levels are stable, and their symptoms are under control, examinations will be performed every three months to ensure your cat remains healthy and happy!



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If you are worried about your cat's health, or want to discuss treatment options, give us a call to make an appointment.