



Understanding **Diabetes Mellitus** *in your dog*

Diabetes mellitus most commonly affects middle-aged dogs. It occurs when the pancreas does not produce the insulin that is needed to regulate blood glucose levels. Therefore, your dog's blood glucose will be persistently high, increasing the risk for additional complications. Although the mechanism of this disease is unknown, it is thought to be an inappropriate attack on the pancreas by the patient's own immune system. Thus, it is referred to as an autoimmune disease.

What clinical signs should I look for?

The most common clinical signs include increased thirst, excessive urination, and weight loss despite an increased appetite. You may notice you are refilling the water bowl more frequently or that your dog needs to be let outside more often.

How is it diagnosed?

Your veterinarian will first obtain a thorough patient history. If diabetes is a likely diagnosis, blood and urine samples will be collected to check for evidence of increased glucose.

How will I manage it?

Diabetes management consists of daily insulin injections, which are given with a meal to reduce the risk of an episode of low blood glucose. Typically dosing occurs twice daily, but the dosage and frequency will vary based on individual needs. Your vet can provide guidance on injection techniques and how to check blood glucose at home using a glucometer. A specially formulated high fiber diet may be recommended to help regulate blood glucose. It is also important to ensure your diabetic dog has access to clean water to meet his or her increased consumption.

Female dogs are two times more likely to develop diabetes mellitus compared to male dogs.

Source: Merck Veterinary Manual, 2019

Although any breed can be affected, a few breeds in particular are predisposed to developing this disease. They include Miniature Poodles, Dachshunds, Schnauzers, Cairn Terriers, and Beagles.

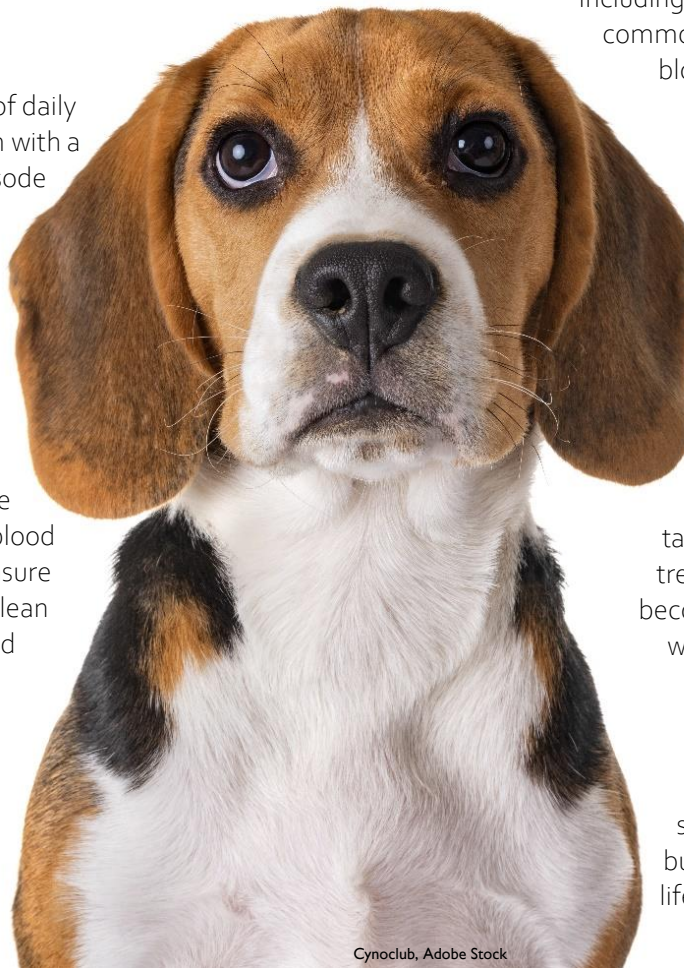
Source: Merck Veterinary Manual, 2019

Are there any complications?

Persistently increased blood glucose can have negative effects on many body systems, including the kidneys, heart, and eyes. It is common to see diabetic dogs have high blood pressure which could require additional management. Most diabetic dogs will also develop cataracts within two years of diagnosis which may lead to blindness.

What is the prognosis?

Proper insulin dosing at home coupled with regular veterinary checkups can help manage your dog's diabetes and prevent additional complications. It may take several months after initiating treatment for your dog's glucose to become regulated. Your veterinarian will work with you to determine an appropriate type of insulin and dosing schedule to meet the individual needs of you and your dog. Managing diabetes requires strong vigilance by the pet parent but your dog can live a long, happy life with appropriate management.



Cynoclub, Adobe Stock

