

DIABETIC REMISSION IN CATS



Committing to consistent insulin administration, following specific dietary recommendations, and performing frequent blood and urine sampling are essential steps in managing your cat's diabetes. While the process may seem intimidating or overwhelming at first, consistent treatment is especially important in newly diagnosed cats and may even provide an additional benefit: remission.

What is diabetic remission?

Feline diabetes develops when the body is unable to produce enough insulin to balance blood sugar levels, or the body's cells become "resistant" to the insulin that is produced.

Diabetic remission—a period of recovery from the clinical signs of diabetes—is possible when the disease is effectively treated with a combination of diet and insulin. Over time, this support may allow your cat's own insulin production to be enough to keep her from showing clinical signs, and she will no longer require insulin injections to maintain normal blood sugar levels. Diabetic remission in cats is a reasonable goal.

How can I help my cat achieve diabetic remission?

Your cat has the best chance of remission if you achieve blood glucose control within six months of diagnosis, carefully monitor your cat at home, stop any medications that could interfere with the insulin, and use an appropriate insulin in combination with a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet.

Working together with your veterinarian to develop an insulin therapy regimen, set home monitoring parameters, and establish a regular recheck schedule is critically important.



What is the role of diet in diabetic remission?

Diabetic cats should be fed a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet to stabilize blood sugar, maximize metabolic rate, improve satiety, and prevent lean muscle mass loss. Your veterinarian can help choose an appropriate diet for your diabetic cat, but in general, canned foods are preferred over dry foods.

Canned foods provide:

- Lower carbohydrate levels
- Ease of portion control
- Lower caloric density (cats can eat a higher volume of canned food and obtain the same caloric intake as smaller volumes of dry food)
- Additional water intake

In addition, feeding portioned meals (as opposed to “free choice” feeding or “grazing”) is ideal when managing diabetic cats because it is easier to monitor appetite and schedule insulin administration to correspond with meal times.

How can knowing the cause of my cat’s diabetes help her achieve diabetic remission?

Risk factors for feline diabetes include insulin resistance caused by obesity, certain diseases and medications, and genetics. If a risk factor has been identified, a well-defined treatment plan can be developed with a reasonable expectation for control and a chance for remission. In the case of obesity, weight loss will be a likely goal during the first few months of treatment.

I’m not sure I can do all that is being asked of me to care for my diabetic cat.

While maintaining control of your cat’s blood sugar is a priority for your veterinary team, so is maintaining your quality of life as a pet owner. Reach out for support if you are feeling overwhelmed by the tasks being asked of you. While diabetes management is a “team sport,” everyone on the team must be up for the task. Remember, you are not alone!