

GENERAL RULE OF THUMB FOR TREATING HYPOGLYCEMIA

This document is available for viewing and printing at http://www.gorbzilla.com/melissa_popcorn.htm

Your best defense against hypoglycemia is home blood glucose testing. If you're not already doing so and your cat allows it, I HIGHLY recommend you test before each shot.

Hypoglycemia or low blood sugar is a dangerous condition that must be treated immediately. Also known as insulin shock or insulin reaction, hypoglycemia occurs when there is too much insulin in the body potentially leading to neurological damage and/or death.

Knowing how to respond to a hypoglycemic event whether or not symptoms are present can save the life of your diabetic cat. The following general guidelines are intended for those who home test the blood glucose levels in their cats. These guidelines are not intended to replace the advice given by your Veterinarian. It is very important that you discuss any and all treatment options with your cat's physician **BEFORE an event has occurred.**

SYMPTOMS

Cat may meow very loudly, stagger (drunkenness), be glassy eyed, hide in unusual places, be unusually hungry (or in Popcorn's case, have total disinterest in even favorite foods), be disoriented, show muscle weakness or lack of coordination, or wedge her/himself between furniture, etc.

VERY LOW NUMBERS – WITHOUT SYMPTOMS

Retest glucose using a large blood sample to make certain you have enough blood, and if you still get a very low number (under 40 mg/dL or 1.9 – 2.2 mmol/L) administer a tablespoon of corn syrup, liquid glucose, pancake syrup or honey and follow with food until the blood glucose numbers rise to acceptable levels. The syrup can be mixed with wet food or poured over dry if the cat will eat the mixture. If using liquid glucose, dilute with water for a thinner consistency.

LOW NUMBERS – WITHOUT SYMPTOMS

Retest glucose using a large blood sample to make certain you have enough blood, and if you still get a low number (40 – 60mg/dL or 2.2 – 3.3mmol/L) give food or treats until the blood glucose numbers rise to an acceptable level. If the cat refuses to eat even his/her favorite foods, you can syringe feed or administer a small amount of syrup.

LOW NUMBERS – MILD SYMPTOMS

Try feeding first or give a little syrup or honey followed by food until the blood glucose numbers rise to an acceptable level and the symptoms disappear. The syrup can be mixed with wet food or poured over dry if the cat will eat the mixture. If the cat will not eat, syringe feed. If your cat will eat dry, feed this first as the high carbs will help to increase his/her bgs quickly. You can then follow with his/her favorite canned food. Keep in mind that giving syrup (Karo, etc.) or honey is not enough because the effects wear off quickly. You need to follow with food. **IF IN ANY DOUBT, TELEPHONE YOUR VETERINARIAN.**

LOW NUMBERS – MODERATE SYMPTOMS

Give a tablespoon of syrup, a teaspoon of liquid glucose, a tablespoon of honey or a tablespoon of sugar syrup followed by food and continue doing so until you see the blood glucose numbers rise to an acceptable level and all symptoms disappear. The syrup, honey, or glucose can be rubbed against the inside of the cat's cheeks or on the gums for quick absorption. You can also mix the syrup with wet food or pour over dry if the cat will eat it. Continue to give syrup and food as needed and observe your cat for signs of recurring hypoglycemia. Keep in mind that giving syrup (Karo, etc.) or honey is not enough because the effects wear off quickly. You need to follow with food. **IF IN ANY DOUBT, TELEPHONE YOUR VETERINARIAN.**

LOW NUMBERS – SEVERE SYMPTOMS

Rub syrup, honey, or glucose on the gums and cheeks if your cat will allow it. Another option for administering syrup, diluted liquid glucose, honey or sugar syrup to a cat who is seizing is to fill a needleless syringe with the mixture and insert via the rectum.

NEVER TRY TO SQUIRT SYRUP, HONEY, OR GLUCOSE TO A CAT WHO IS SEIZURING AS THE CAT COULD CHOKE ON IT! RUSH TO EMERGENCY.

AGAIN! ANYTIME YOU CAT IS SEIZURING OR LIMP, RUB KARO, GLUCOSE OR HONEY ONLY ON GUMS OR ADMINISTER RECTALLY AND GET TO EMERGENCY OR YOUR NEAREST CLINIC IMMEDIATELY!!!

Remember that syrup or any other sugared syrup/preparation will spike the blood glucose ONLY for a short period of time, so food is really important with mild and moderate symptoms. Dry food (high carbohydrates) will keep the blood glucose numbers elevated longer, so it's a better food to give during a hypoglycemic episode.

After a hypoglycemic episode cats may be more sensitive to insulin, so a reduction in dosage is generally required, especially considering too much insulin – whether due to dosage, inadequate food intake, or the cat's changing insulin requirements – caused the hypoglycemic event in the first place. With moderate to severe episodes, your Vet may have you skip the next injection altogether. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DISCUSS YOUR CAT'S HYPOGLYCEMIC EVENT WITH YOUR VET, SO TOGETHER YOU CAN DECIDE UPON THE NEXT COURSE OF ACTION.**

Always keep in mind that with low blood glucose and no symptoms, the BG you get is not as important as where it is headed. In other words, if you get a BG of 100 mg/dL or 5.6 mmol/L or less and there are still several hours or more before the insulin peaks, your need to watch your cat (and the numbers) carefully and take appropriate steps. With very low numbers and NO SYMPTOMS, a cat can be fine one moment and seizure the next.

BE PREPARED! KNOW THE SYMPTOMS AND KNOW THE TREATMENT!

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