



## Does your cat or dog have diabetes?

The obesity epidemic sweeping Britain is taking toll on pets as well as their owners according to data from pet insurer Animal Friends which reveals a startling increase in the number of pets diagnosed with diabetes.

The alarm was raised after a survey of 9000 pets which showed the [rise in the condition had risen by 900 per cent in just five years \(1\)](#). The study suggested that cats were at greatest risk with a shocking 1,161 per cent increase in feline cases being diagnosed since 2011. At the same time cases in dogs have increased by 850 per cent (1).

A surge in overweight pets is at the heart of the problem.

**What causes pet diabetes?** Diabetes happens because the body stops making or responding to insulin – a hormone that controls the amount of sugar in the blood. As well as difficulties caused by an inability to turn sugar into energy the body can use, high sugar levels in the blood result in sugar (and lots of water) being passed out in the urine.

If you're concerned that your cat or dog may have diabetes, please take them to see us. **In November, pet owners are being invited to 'take a tinkle' – with a FREE urine test kit available.**

### What are the symptoms of diabetes in dogs & cats:

- increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- changes in appetite
- weight loss

- deteriorating coat condition
- lethargy or lack of energy

Some pets are more commonly diagnosed with diabetes than others with middle to older age dogs and cats being most at risk. Diabetes typically occurs when dogs and cats are between 4 to 14 years old. Unspayed female dogs are twice as likely as male dogs to suffer from diabetes. In cats, overweight male cats are most at risk.

Take this [quick online assessment](#) to find out if your pet is at risk of diabetes. If your pet is at risk, get in touch with us and have your pet tested for diabetes.

**Early diagnosis is vital** Like all illnesses, the earlier the problem is diagnosed and treated, the better. Unfortunately, your pet can't tell you how they're feeling. Fortunately, though, diabetes can be easily diagnosed.

**What if your dog or cat has pet diabetes?** If you've just found out that your dog or cat has diabetes you may be worried about what the future holds or how you and your pet will cope with the treatment programme. In fact, many thousands of dog and cat owners have gone through exactly this experience and as you embark on caring for a pet with diabetes, help is at hand. We will work closely with you on a programme tailored for your pet including diet, exercise, monitoring your pet and treatment.

1. Study by Animal Friends of 9000 pets over five years published 2016 <https://www.animalfriends.co.uk/blog/diabetes-pets-study-2016/>

## November Special Offer

During November we are offering **free urine sampling** to check your pet for Diabetes.

Just pop into the surgery for a urine collection pot, drop the sample back to us and one of our Nurses will get in touch with you to discuss the results and book an appointment. It's free!

It's not just Diabetes that our nurses can discuss with you, please call us if you're concerned about your pet's weight or overall health as they age.



☆☆ **Veterinary Awards** ☆☆

There is still time to nominate us if you think we have gone above and beyond for you and your pet. Nominations will close on the 12th of January.

These Awards celebrate the hard work and dedication of veterinary staff, recognising those who inspire their clients and colleagues with their commitment and passion.

You can nominate in the following categories:

- ♥ Practice of the year
- ♥ Veterinary Surgeon of the year
- ♥ Veterinary Nurse of the year
- ♥ Practice Manager of the year
- ♥ Practice support staff of the year

Follow the link to register your vote: <https://www.petplan.co.uk/vetawards/>

As always, thank you to all of our clients and your pets - we wouldn't change our jobs for the world and we feel very lucky to have such amazing clients.



## Ask the Vet

Michele Turner RCVS

### Christmas is fast approaching

The clocks have gone back an hour, the nights are getting longer and Christmas is fast approaching. During the holiday period there are new and interesting things in our homes for our dogs and cats to investigate and sometimes cause them problems. Hopefully this article will highlight some of the potential hazards, what to do if you have a problem and with some thought avoid them altogether.

#### Decorations

We all love putting up our decorations, especially the shiny and glitter covered baubles, glass ornaments can however cause some injuries.

Animals can knock our decorations off trees and shelves, glass easily shatters and is liable to cut feet and paws alike. Cut paws may be so deep that a visit to our

surgery for an anaesthetic and stitches may be required. I have seen and repaired cut tongues where inquisitive dogs have picked up glass balls and crunched them up and even swallowed them. When buying new things to decorate the house with, think plastic and keep the glass heirlooms in a safe place.

Tinsel and the long strings of silver and gold that hang on our trees can prove irresistible to many animals and in the excitement of play can be chewed and swallowed. The unlucky pet may not be able to pass these long pieces of foreign material, which can be incredibly long and can become a foreign body that can start getting stuck around the tongue and in small dogs and cats possibly be peeking out the other end. These are often difficult things to remove and may require many incisions into the guts to untangle and remove and are not without complication. If you have a young kitten or mischievous puppy, maybe less is more – go minimal for a change?

Fairy lights are great, but hide the flexes to avoid chewing and electrical accidents and injuries due to the tree falling down or the animals getting entangled in the wires.

Plants are always popular at Christmas as are seasonal bouquets. Remember Lilies are toxic to cats and can cause permanent kidney damage if eaten or pollen ingested, so try and avoid these flowers if you have cats. My favourite is the Poinsettia, not a truly toxic plant but it can still cause gastric upsets, salivating and anorexia if munched although supportive care will usually resolve the problem.

### **Christmas treats and Goodies**

Think of all the great things we love to eat at Christmas, chocolate, mince pies, Christmas cake and puddings. Many of these foods can be very tempting for our pets and can cause some nasty side effects with potential long-term problems. Remember even a big Christmas dinner of normally tolerated human food may upset our animal's stomachs.

### **Chocolate**

Dogs seem to find chocolate just as delicious as we do, but it is full of chemicals that can act as nervous system stimulants and make dogs very poorly. Dark chocolate has the most theobromine in it and white chocolate the least, but it doesn't take a lot to take effect.

If your dog eats a lot of chocolate, especially the dark variety, ring us immediately and we will see them straight away.

We would want to give an injection to make the dog sick and empty the stomach, and then administer activated charcoal to act in the intestine to bind any toxins. These are both incredibly messy things to do, so please do not be upset if we rush your dog straight to the prep room to initiate treatment and then come back to speak to you. If enough chocolate has been ingested we may need to keep the dog in to give intravenous fluids to support the kidneys and sometimes administer betablockers if the heart rate is very high.

Please ask your friends not to post boxes of chocolates through the door, as one of our clients had this happen when she was not in, but the dog was, we had a very messy afternoon but after fluids the dog recovered well. Keep the chocolate safe until it is time to unwrap it.

### **Mince pies and dried fruit**

Lots of our favourites include dried fruits such as raisins, sultanas and currants. My favourites are the chocolate raisins!

Dogs love fruit cakes, my own dog has managed to find some at home and one of our nurse's cats ate a mince pie, so we are not perfect but understood how to react.

We do not understand the toxic mechanism in dried fruit, but generally the onset of any effects can take 6-24 hours and the common signs are often vomiting and diarrhoea, anorexia and weakness, but can cause severe pancreatitis and acute kidney failure which are both life threatening. Again we do need to induce vomiting to empty the stomach and administer the messy charcoal, and use symptomatic treatment and supportive intravenous fluids.

Outcomes are generally good if caught before the onset of any kidney damage, which we can diagnose and monitor with blood tests performed in our practice laboratory. However prognosis may be guarded if the kidneys are damaged.

This is not meant to be gloomy, but to make everyone think a little. We love to see your animals, but at the busy holiday period when we are all so busy rushing about, we would prefer to be able to give some thoughts to enable any visits to be pleasant and not an emergency. If you have any worries or concerns please ring the surgery and you will initially speak to one of the receptionists or our excellent nursing team and they will be happy to advise you in an appropriate manner.