

Home Testing: Practice to "Purrfection"

from Ellen and Kismet's website, "[Kismet, Feline Diabetes & Me](#)"

Learning to home test is the most important thing, second only to treatment, that you can do for your sugarcat. Many folks shy away from the idea because they are afraid it will hurt their cat or believe that their cat will not tolerate it. As far as pain is concerned, the actual "prick" to draw a blood drop feels much like a mosquito bite. Most cats don't even flinch when their ear or paw is pricked and often purr throughout the process. Getting some cats used to a new routine, however, is a very different story. With the right approach and a lot of patience, most cats adapt well to the idea of having their ears or paws pricked for glucose testing.

Cat Psychology

Cats are creatures of habit - anything that disturbs their routine is often perceived at best as an irritant. I'm sure that some can identify with the statement "If it isn't my cat's idea - he wants nothing to do with it". The best way to approach home testing with a cat is to make the process something that they **want** to do. By slowly introducing your cat to the steps required in getting a blood glucose reading, giving lots of praise along the way and allowing plenty time for him to adjust, the chances increase dramatically for success. Cats are also highly sensitive to the emotions of their human companions. If you are scared and nervous about home testing, your cat will become frightened as well and will resist all efforts. Practicing helps the caregiver feel much more comfortable and at ease with the process as well.

Practice to "Purrfection"

When I first began home testing, I jumped right in with both feet. Unfortunately, I was only able to get a test or two on Kismet before she started shying away and ducking from me when I wanted to check her blood glucose levels (bgs). It was at that point that I decided to start over from scratch. Here is what I did:

- 1.) I put all my testing supplies in an area that Kis often went to for a nap. When I found her there later, I petted her and gave her lots of scratches. Once she was purring, I took out the supplies and showed them to her, one by one, letting her smell them and get used to the sight and sound of them. Afterwards I gave her a treat and lots of praise - leaving her to continue her nap. I did this a couple of times throughout the day.
- 2.) Next I did what I call a "dry run". I started as before with lots of love and scratches, however this time, I went through the motions of getting a sample without drawing blood. I rubbed her ears and warmed them with the rice sock, put a dab of vaseline on her ear, "clicked" my lancet pen and "beeped" my meter so she could get used to the sounds. Also gave lots of praise after each step, of course. Afterwards, I gave her a treat and lots of love for being a good girl. I did this several times until I felt like Kis and I were pretty calm and comfortable with the whole process.
- 3.) Did an actual blood glucose test - no fuss and a successful reading!

Depending on the cat, it may take more or less time for each step of the process. Kis was receptive to home testing again in about 2 days using this method. Don't rush into the next step until you are sure that both you and your cat are ready. Taking your time in the beginning will lead to greater success in the future.

For more information regarding the home testing process, please check out the link below.

[Harry's Hometesting Site](#)