

When interviewing vets for the treatment of your diabetic cat

from a discussion in sugarcats chat @ Gorbzilla, lovingly compiled by Debra and Care Bear

While there are times that we don't fully understand **why** our vet does things in a certain way, we should always feel comfortable that he/she is looking out for our cats' best interests. If you are in doubt of this commitment to your cat's health, there are warning signs that should prompt you to think about working with a different vet. Of course your vet may be a great general practice vet and just not have a great deal of experience with sugarcats. If your vet is willing to partner and learn with you about this disease, it is probably well worth the education commitment to maintain that relationship. It's someone you and kitty know and are comfortable with already and that's a great foundation to build on.

If your vet is unwilling to learn with you, or discourages you from learning more and being a proactive caregiver, it may be time to locate a new vet. Of course some folks just don't have a regular vet because their cat is never sick (well until the FD diagnosis of course!) so these questions can help when interviewing prospective vets.

Most vets won't show all of the signs listed below, good or bad. If you feel that you can work with your vet then do so, what you and your vet learn together will help your sugarcats and future sugarcats treated at that practice! If your vet shows several of the warning signs listed below, it may be time to start interviewing other vets. Of course, do not cease relations with one vet until you've found another you're comfortable with. Burning bridges doesn't help your cat when an emergency arises.

Signs that you may need to locate a new vet

- ❑ You've expressed a desire to learn how to hometest and your vet discourages you.
- ❑ You ask "why this particular insulin" and the vet responds with its "the only one" he/she uses.
- ❑ The vet wants to make increases of insulin/oral medications dose based on single blood glucose readings and doesn't allow a proper settling period.
- ❑ The vet wants to start insulin/oral medicine treatment at too high a starting dose. (For insulin, anything above 1 unit is considered to be too high a starting dose by most caregivers and conservative vets.)
- ❑ The vet, or staff, insists that they do blood glucose curves on Kitty although you want to do them at home.
- ❑ The vet, or staff, doesn't seem concerned with your questions and concerns about Kitty's health and treatment.
- ❑ The vet doesn't check for ketones when Kitty is sick or educate you on doing this.
- ❑ The vet tells you to continue increasing insulin/oral medications until the pee stick stays **normal/negative** colored.
- ❑ The vet or staff is not willing to "make time" to see you when you've got an emergency going on with Kitty (during normal office hours) or refer you to another facility.
- ❑ The vet or staff tells you that you must feed brand "A" or Kitty will suffer the consequences.
- ❑ The vet doesn't advise you of the complications of your treatment (like hypoglycemia) or tell you what to do in such instances.
- ❑ You see any abuse, mistreatment, or neglect of an animal (or owner) while there, by a staff member or vet.

- ❑ The vet is unwilling to tailor Kitty's treatment to Kitty's needs and is very “cookie in approach.
- ❑ The vet or staff acts hostile or defensive if you ask questions about Kitty's treatment.
- ❑ The vet or staff doesn't return phone calls in a timely manner (bearing in mind we all have jobs and busy days and things get lost sometimes, but if it's a continual pattern it's a problem).
- ❑ The vet or staff refuses to make copies of Kitty's bloodwork/medical history for you when you request.

Signs that you are working with a good vet

- ❑ The vet and staff encourage hometesting and will teach you how to hometest Kitty, if you wish to learn.
- ❑ The vet is willing to change insulin types, as needed by each individual cat.
- ❑ The vet will only make an increase in Kitty's dose after several blood glucose measurements and after a proper settling period.
- ❑ The vet starts Kitty out on a low dose of insulin/oral meds.
- ❑ The vet asks you to do curves at home and fax, email, or phone in the results to them for advice.
- ❑ The vet is willing to listen to your concerns about Kitty's health and treatment.
- ❑ The vet checks for ketones whenever Kitty is presented as being sick and encourages you to do so at home.
- ❑ The vet has told you about the complications of your treatment and provided you with information on signs to look for and how to treat.
- ❑ The vet, or staff, is willing to work Kitty in if Kitty needs to see the vet NOW.
- ❑ The vet, or staff, offer a variety of foods or can tell you of several brands you can try for feeding Kitty.
- ❑ The vet and staff treat each animal and owner with kindness and respect.
- ❑ The vet and staff are willing to suggest ways to help tailor Kitty's treatment to Kitty's specific needs.
- ❑ The vet and staff encourage you to ask questions concerning Kitty's treatment.
- ❑ The vet or staff returns phone calls in a timely manner.
- ❑ The vet and staff is available to make copies of Kitty's bloodwork/medical history for you at your request.