

UNDER THE WEATHER

The Dreaded 'D' Word

Bruno walked in, majestic as usual, except that he didn't have the usual sparkle in his eyes. What's up with Bruno? I asked his guardian, giving him a quick pat on his head.

He's very listless, she said... Eating his food, going for his walks, but just not his normal self. Anything else? I prodded her. Yes, she said, he seems very thirsty, just can't seem to get enough water. In fact at night he goes to the bathroom to drink water if his water bowl is empty.

Okay, I said, let me finish his physical examination and then we'll do his blood work. I did a thorough physical, but everything seemed normal – temperature, pulse, respiration, all within normal range. I started checking his face – mucous membranes seemed normal, but his eyes seemed hazy. Shining a torch in his eyes, I told his guardian he has early onset of cataract. We drew his blood and sent it for some blood tests to check the liver, kidneys, adrenal glands and blood sugar for diabetes. The results came in the evening. His blood sugar was high. Bruno had diabetes. His guardian called up for the reports the next morning. Bruno has diabetes, I informed her, and you will have to come with him to understand the treatment protocol. Oh, she said, diabetes? It runs in the family. My husband has it too! He takes



**DR SANGEETA
VENGSARKAR SHAH**

tablets for it daily. Yes, I smiled, Bruno's part of the family, but unfortunately dogs who have diabetes don't respond to oral hypoglycemic tablets.

Oh no, she said, does that mean he needs to take insulin injections? Yes, I said, it's a little tedious, but one gets used to it, and many patients with diabetes are now leading happy, healthy lives with regular medications and monitoring.

Diabetes mellitus is a disease in which the pancreas stop production of insulin. The pancreas are glands close to the stomach which have a role in digestion. These glands produce enzymes which digest food, and another part of it produces insulin. Destruction of that part of the pancreas results in diabetes. Generally, there are two types of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2. Humans and cats may have

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Diabetes has a tendency to affect mostly middle-aged, obese dogs. As it advances, though, there is loss in weight since glucose is continuously leaked out in urine and the body begins using fat for energy. Females are slightly more predisposed to diabetes than male dogs.



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Causes: The exact cause of diabetes is not known, although obesity, pancreatitis and a high fat, high carbohydrate diet are thought to be contributing factors.

Diabetes is sometimes caused by pregnancy, a disease of the adrenal glands called Cushing's disease, and steroid medications. In this case, it is possible for the pancreas to start producing insulin again after the primary cause is treated.

Symptoms: Although diabetes has a gradual onset over a few weeks, the most pronounced symptoms are increased quantity of urination (due to glucose being leaked out in urine

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