



ABOUT THE DISEASE

Hypoglycemia is a general term referring to patients with a low blood sugar level. *Hypoglycemia* is not a disease itself, but is a symptom of an underlying disease or condition.

As blood sugar is used as the main source of energy, *hypoglycemia* may cause weakness, vomiting, tremors, seizure activity, loss of consciousness, and even death.

Patients under 3 months of age are at greatest risk because they have not fully developed an ability to tightly regulate their blood glucose levels. Stress factors such as poor nutrition, cold environments, and intestinal parasites can all trigger *hypoglycemia*. Some toy canine breeds are especially susceptible to this problem.

Adult patients being treated for diabetes are at risk, as well as patients with severe liver disease, tumors of the pancreas, or liver shunts (portosystemic).

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

A state of *hypoglycemia* is easily diagnosed with point-of-care glucometers or blood work. The more difficult task is to determine why patients are actually exhibiting a state of *hypoglycemia*.

Depending on a patient's age and concurrent symptoms, a battery of tests may be required to diagnose the underlying disease causing the *hypoglycemia*. These may include urine tests, hormone testing, ultrasound, or x-rays (radiographs).

TREATMENT

If still conscious, you may attempt to feed the patient or administer sugar-containing substances such as syrup.

Seek immediate consultation with a veterinarian to help stabilize blood sugar levels and determine the underlying condition for proper treatment and prevention.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- *Hypoglycemia* is a symptom; it is not the disease.
- Ensure puppies and kittens have proper nutrition, are regularly examined by a veterinarian, and have been properly vaccinated and dewormed to reduce stress.
- If a patient is a diabetic, attempt to feed or provide a sugar-containing substance and then immediately contact a veterinary clinic for additional instructions.