

FDA Issues Alert on Pet Insulin Product

Product used to treat diabetes in dogs and cats may have formulation problems.

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Veterinarians and pet owners are being warned to closely monitor dogs and cats receiving Vetsulin because the product may have varying amounts of crystalline zinc insulin in the formulation, according to an alert sent out Monday by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

Vetsulin, which is manufactured by Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, is used to treat diabetes in animals.

Because the product is out of specification, there could be a delay in insulin action and overall longer duration of insulin activity, according to the FDA. Products having significant problems with stability can affect the management of chronic diseases. Unstable insulin products can result in unpredictable fluctuations in the glucose levels of diabetic patients, the FDA noted in its alert.

Veterinarians and pet owners are urged to monitor patients for any changes in onset or duration of activity, or for any signs of hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia. The classic signs of hyperglycemia include increased thirst, increased urination, weight loss and lethargy. The classic signs of hypoglycemia include disorientation, unsteadiness, weakness, lethargy and seizures.

The FDA said that while Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health is working with them to resolve the issue, supplies may be limited. Therefore, the FDA is suggesting that pet owners talk to their veterinarians about transitioning their diabetic pets to other insulin products.