

Diabetic Dog

Diet, exercise and insulin can help.

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Q. My 10-year-old Miniature Pinscher was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus. He gets 16 units of NPH insulin daily. Is there a pill I can give [instead]?

A. Insulin deficiency causes most dogs' diabetes and usually requires two injections a day for treatment.

Oral medications (hypoglycemic agents) used to control humans' blood sugar levels show only limited success in dogs.

You can manage the dog's diabetes by controlling its weight. A diet with moderate to high fiber levels and increased complex carbohydrates helps diabetic dogs but does not eliminate the need for insulin injections. Exercise and activity help promote weight loss and improved metabolic function. Ask your veterinarian for an exercise plan for your dog.