

# HYPOGLYCEMIA

## HYPOGLYCEMIA:

Hypoglycemia is the condition that occurs when a pet's blood sugar drops significantly below normal levels. Hypoglycemia is so common in the small "toy" breeds, that you really should think before you adopt one of these little puppies. They are not living stuffed animals – they are high maintenance pets with a handicap, at least until they grow up a bit. Hypoglycemia may be inherited, due to an underlying disease process, or simply a result of the body's internal organs developing a little more slowly than normal.

Hypoglycemia has many other causes, including exercise induced episodes in retriever dogs, liver disease, severe infection (sepsis), Addison's Disease (low adrenal gland function), pancreatitis, starvation, and even cancer. Low blood sugar can be caused by ingestion of toxins such as the sugar substitute xylitol which is highly toxic to dogs, and some chicken jerky treats, particularly those imported from China.

## SIGNS:

- Loss of energy, more quiet than normal.
- Shivering.
- Wobbly, cannot stand.
- Semi-comatose or comatose (sleepy).
- Subnormal body temperature.
- "Fainting" spells in older dogs, particularly during exercise.
- If severe, seizures can result.

## TREATMENT:

IV Injections of dextrose can rapidly correct dangerously low blood sugar. Small, frequent meals (4-x meals per day) can help maintain blood sugar levels in dogs that struggle with low blood sugar. Of course, diagnosing the underlying cause and correcting or treating it if possible is one of the most important components to successful treatment of chronic hypoglycemia. Once a diagnosis is made, medications may be prescribed to help maintain normal blood sugar levels.

## HOME THERAPY: (when you think an attack is on the verge of happening)

- 2-3cc Karo Syrup, Honey, or Sugar Water/5 pounds body weight – given by mouth, or spread on the gums.
- Keep Warm.
- Limit Exercise.
- Have examined by veterinarian to insure there are no other causes.

## PREVENTION PRECAUTIONS:

All newly arrived puppies, especially toy breeds, should have honey, light Karo Syrup or Nutrical® 4-6x daily for a few days, while going through the stress of weaning. Feed high quality puppy/kitten foods, and monitor food intake to be sure consuming enough food to meet requirements.

### References:

Wendy Brookes, DVM – [VeterinaryPartner.com](http://VeterinaryPartner.com)  
Wendy Blount DVM – [PracticalVetMed.com](http://PracticalVetMed.com)