

Hypoglycemia Must Be Treated

The following information was extracted from various sources listed at the end of this document.

Transient Juvenile Hypoglycemia, which is brought on by fasting, is common in Toy dog breeds, such as Yorkshire Terrier, Toy Poodle, Pomeranian and other Toy dog breeds, and usually seen in puppies 5 to 16 weeks of age. Stress, low body temperature, poor nutrition, sudden change in feed, water and schedule patterns, infections, and premature birth may precipitate the onset of hypoglycemia. Some puppies, bred exclusively for tiny size ("teacup Yorkies", "teacup Chihuahua"), are even more predisposed to Transient Juvenile Hypoglycemia since insufficient muscle mass may make it difficult for the body to store the glucose and keep its blood sugar properly regulated.

Most common clinical signs of hypoglycemia are drowsiness, shivering, collapsing, disorientation, seizures, listlessness, depression, muscle weakness and tremors. Lee Weston, author of an article about Hypoglycemia says that *"the entire sequence of clinical signs is not always seen, so close observation of your pet and knowing when your dog is going into a distressed state can mean the difference between life and death of your dog. Immediate treatment by a veterinarian is imperative, as recurrence of, or prolonged attacks, can cause permanent damage to the brain."*

It has been proven experimentally that eight hours fasting in a Yorkshire terrier puppy can result in marked variation of blood glucose, showing both hypo- en hyperglycaemia.

Frequent feeding of a high-energy, protein-rich diet to both mother and puppies may prevent toy-breed puppies from developing hypoglycemia and may help them to overcome periods with a decreased intake of energy.

Be Prepared

Always have corn syrup or sugar available. Corn syrup works well because it is a very pure sugar, and it is liquid. "Karo" is a brand name of corn syrup, Pancake syrup, honey, or table sugar dissolved in some water will also work. Wherever your pet is, there should be an emergency supply of sugar. You should carry sugar with you when you take your pet out of the house, even for a short walk.

How to carry a sugar supply -- purse, doggie pack, car, or pocket

- Use small screw-top plastic bottles from a sporting goods store or "travel-size" plastic bottles from the drug store.
- Packets of honey.
- Liquid glucose packets can be purchased at the pharmacy. The tablets might work if your pet is just beginning to show signs of hypo, but a liquid sugar is better - faster acting and easy to use.
- A tube of cake decorating gel, which is mostly sugar.
- Or fill a 1mL syringe (no needle) with corn syrup and carry it on trips in case. With a syringe, it is easy to get the syrup in the mouth without being bitten.

These are general guidelines for treating hypoglycemia. Ask your vet for information that is specific to your pet.

- **Mild hypoglycemia:** If your pet's bg is only slightly low or if it is showing only mild signs of hypoglycemia, you can often treat it by immediately feeding the pet some of its regular food. The blood glucose raising effects of the food may be enough to counteract the hypoglycemia. If your pet refuses its regular food, try offering a food it really enjoys or some treats. Any food is probably ok in this situation. Your main concern is to get the blood glucose up and to eliminate

the signs of hypoglycemia. You need to observe your pet for several hours to make sure the hypoglycemia does not happen again.

- ***Moderate hypoglycemia:*** Corn syrup should be given, either alone, or combined with food. Syrup can be mixed in with wet food or drizzled over dry food. The syrup will help bring the bg up quickly, and the food will help keep the bg elevated for a longer period of time. Rub it on the gums and inside of the cheeks. Small dogs should be given about 1 teaspoon. You need to observe your pet for several hours to make sure the hypoglycemia does not happen again. The blood glucose raising effects of the syrup will last only for a short time. If the hypoglycemia is severe, the effects of the syrup will wear off and the hypoglycemia may come back. Continue observing your pet, and give syrup or syrup and food as needed.
- ***Severe hypoglycemia:*** If your pet is severely hypoglycemic, especially if it is having seizures or unconscious, you must give corn syrup immediately. Carefully rub small amounts of syrup on the cheeks and gums. Do not put a lot of liquid in the pet's mouth, and be sure the pet does not choke. Do not stick your fingers inside the teeth of a seizing pet - you may get bitten. Then, Call the vet. If you can not contact your vet, call any vet - and get additional instructions. Your pet will probably have to go to the vet immediately.
- ***Follow up*** Whenever a pet has a hypoglycemic attack, you should contact your veterinarian

Exercise can cause hypoglycemia. If it is out of the ordinary, even a small amount of exercise can cause hypoglycemia

Treating hypoglycemia

During a hypo attack, your goal is to stay calm, bring the blood glucose back to a safe level, continue to observe your pet and contact the vet

If your pet is acting strangely, you should assume it is due to hypoglycemia and treat it accordingly. This is a situation where it is better to be safe than sorry. If your pet is not hypoglycemic, your treatment may have raised the blood glucose for a few hours. But if your pet is hypoglycemic, you have just saved its life.

Sometimes a dog will outgrow this condition since it affects puppies 5 to 16 weeks of age most commonly. However, if the dog is high strung, or has a lot of nervous energy, the dog will need to be watched carefully, and kept in a calm state. Some instances that precipitates an attack might be: the puppy being placed in a new home, or while being shipped. It may occur if a puppy misses a meal, becomes chilled, or becomes exhausted from too much play.

What can you do for your dog if you notice the early signs of hypoglycemia? You may want to let the dog have some sugar water, or Karo syrup, or even some honey. Depending on the size of your dog just a teaspoon or so. Call your veterinarian as soon as possible. If your dog becomes unconscious, have someone call your vet, and get the dog to the vet immediately. Place the dog on a rigid surface for transport, and have a rider check to make sure the dog has not inhaled its own secretions, or has strangled on its tongue.

We obtained the above information from the following sources on the web.

<http://www.gopetsamerica.com/dog-health/hypoglycemia.aspx>

<http://www.petdiabetes.org/hypoglycemia.htm>

<http://www.barkbytes.com/medical/med0086.html>