

# Nature's Way to Support Your Dog's Blood Sugar

Blood sugar issues in dogs don't start overnight. Discover how natural remedies, along with dietary and lifestyle changes, give your dog the backup they need to stay healthy and diabetes-free.

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Diabetes in dogs has surged dramatically in recent years, largely due to processed diets and a lack of regular physical activity in today's pet lifestyles
- Blood sugar problems often develop gradually and go unnoticed until symptoms like fatigue, excessive thirst, and weight loss become more obvious
- Diets high in processed carbohydrates and low in species-appropriate nutrients place strain on the pancreas and contribute to insulin resistance
- Natural remedies like Ceylon cinnamon, Gymnema sylvestre, and omega-3s help support insulin function, reduce glucose spikes, and protect tissues from damage
- Daily movement, portion control, a real food diet, and a consistent routine are key foundations for supporting stable blood sugar and protecting your dog's long-term health

Blood sugar problems in dogs aren't rare anymore. In some regions, diabetes diagnoses have surged by more than 850% in just five years, putting thousands of pets at risk for complications that go far beyond high glucose levels.<sup>1</sup> The rise reflects a deeper shift in how dogs are fed, exercised, and cared for in everyday life.

For pet parents, this raises an important question — How do you support your dog's blood sugar naturally, day in and day out? The answer has less to do with managing disease and more to do with shaping a daily rhythm that supports metabolic stability. That rhythm starts with what goes in the bowl, but it doesn't end there.

## Why Do Dogs Develop Blood Sugar Problems?

Most blood sugar problems in dogs start gradually. Over time, their body loses the ability to keep glucose levels steady, either because the pancreas stops making enough insulin or because the cells stop responding to it. As a result, sugar builds up in the bloodstream instead of being used for energy, and this imbalance strains nearly every system in the body. If left unchecked, it eventually leads to diabetes.

Multiple factors contribute to this breakdown, but one of the biggest contributors is diet.<sup>2</sup> Dogs are naturally designed to digest a meat-based diet, with only minimal amounts of plant material. However, most commercial dog foods contain starches, grains, and carbohydrate-heavy filler ingredients that dogs never evolved to process. These foods put pressure on the pancreas and promote weight gain. The result is a metabolic setup that invites obesity and leads to insulin resistance over time.

Many dogs are now overweight simply because they're eating too many calories from the wrong sources and not burning enough of them off. In some cases, repeated vaccinations and other immune stressors may also damage the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin.

Lack of movement makes the problem worse. Dogs who aren't getting enough daily exercise miss out on one of the body's key tools for blood sugar regulation — muscle-driven glucose uptake.<sup>3</sup> The result is more sugar lingering in the bloodstream and less demand for insulin. Obesity, in turn, raises the risk of insulin resistance and makes it harder for the body to regain balance.

Beyond food and exercise, other factors interfere with blood sugar control. These include chronic inflammation, hormonal shifts (like those seen in unspayed females or dogs with Cushing's disease), long-term steroid use, chronic pancreatitis, and in some cases, immune-related damage to insulin-producing beta cells. Certain breeds are more prone to these problems than others, and aging alone brings added stress to the pancreas and metabolic system.<sup>4</sup>

## 7 Symptoms of Diabetes in Dogs

Blood sugar problems often build slowly, and the signs aren't always easy to spot at first. But as the imbalance progresses, the body begins to show clear signs that something isn't working. Recognizing these early symptoms gives you the chance to step in before serious complications set in:<sup>5,6</sup>

1. **Increased thirst and urination** — High blood sugar pulls water from the body's tissues, which causes your dog to drink more than usual. The excess fluid then passes through the kidneys, leading to more frequent urination.
2. **Increased appetite** — Even though there's more sugar in the bloodstream, the cells can't access it without insulin. This creates a sense of internal starvation, driving your dog to eat more in an attempt to get the fuel their body isn't using.
3. **Unexplained weight loss** — Despite eating more, diabetic dogs often lose weight. This happens because the body starts breaking down fat and muscle for energy when glucose isn't reaching the cells.
4. **Fatigue or low energy** — Without access to glucose, cells don't get the fuel they need to function. The result is a drop in energy that shows up as sluggishness, reduced play, or general disinterest in activity.
5. **Vision problems** — High blood sugar causes structural changes in the eyes, especially the lens. Over time, this may lead to cataracts and impaired vision, which is common in diabetic dogs.
6. **Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)** — Excess sugar in the urine creates an ideal environment for bacteria. This increases your pet's risk of UTIs, which may present as frequent urination, accidents in the house, or discomfort when peeing.
7. **Kidney problems in more advanced cases** — The kidneys are constantly filtering excess glucose, which puts them under long-term stress. If blood sugar remains elevated, kidney function gradually declines.

When blood sugar stays high over time, these symptoms gradually worsen and affect your dog's quality of life in ways that are difficult to reverse. Hence, maintaining steady blood sugar is essential for protecting your dog's long-term health.

## Herbs, Nutrients, and Supplements That Help

Once blood sugar issues start to develop, your dog's body has to work harder to maintain balance. Certain herbs and supplements have been shown to help regulate blood sugar, support insulin function, and protect the body from the effects of prolonged glucose elevation, including:

- **Ceylon cinnamon** — This form of cinnamon contains cinnamaldehyde, a compound that helps your pet's body use insulin more efficiently. It also slows down the rate at which carbohydrates are broken down and absorbed, which leads to a steadier release of glucose after meals.<sup>7</sup>  
  
Ceylon cinnamon is safer for long-term use than the more common Cassia variety, which contains higher levels of coumarin and may strain the liver in large amounts.<sup>8</sup>
- **Gymnema sylvestre** — An herb traditionally used in Ayurvedic medicine, Gymnema has been shown to reduce sugar absorption in the gut and also help limit cravings for sweet foods. By interfering with the uptake of glucose in the digestive tract, it supports a more gradual release of sugar into the bloodstream.<sup>9</sup>
- **Chromium and alpha-lipoic acid** — These two nutrients work well together to support insulin sensitivity.<sup>10</sup> Chromium helps transport glucose into cells,<sup>11</sup> while alpha-lipoic acid functions as a powerful antioxidant that protects against cellular stress caused by high blood sugar.<sup>12</sup> Together, they support more efficient use of glucose throughout the body.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** — Found in cold-water fish and certain supplements, omega-3s help improve how cells absorb and respond to insulin. They also help lower inflammation, which is commonly increased in dogs with metabolic conditions.<sup>13</sup>
- **Antioxidants** — Elevated blood sugar generates oxidative stress, which damages cells and interferes with how organs function. Antioxidants, whether from whole foods, multivitamin blends, or specific supplements, help neutralize this stress and protect the body's tissues from further harm.<sup>14,15</sup>

When introducing any supplement, work closely with your veterinarian, especially if your dog is already on medication or insulin. These tools are most effective when used as part of an integrated approach that includes food, movement, and consistency.

## 5 Lifestyle and Dietary Foundations for Blood Sugar Control

What you do each day has the biggest impact on your dog's long-term health. Diet, movement, and rhythm work together to shape how the body manages glucose. These simple foundations offer a powerful way to support blood sugar balance and take pressure off the organs involved in regulation:<sup>16,17,18</sup>

1. **Feed species-appropriate food** — Dogs thrive on meals built around high-quality lean animal protein, healthy fats, and moderate amounts of low-starch veggies and fruits. Raw or gently cooked food provides what their body requires and relieves the strain caused by carb-heavy commercial diets.
2. **Limit dietary starches** — Ingredients like grains, white potatoes, and legumes are common in kibble and provide a source of energy, but when used in large amounts, they lead to excessive sugar in the bloodstream. Keeping these starches in check helps reduce the risk of weight gain, insulin resistance, and blood sugar fluctuations.
3. **Be mindful of timing and portion size** — Some practitioners recommend smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day to reduce sharp post-meal glucose rises. Others suggest two evenly portioned meals per

day, especially when insulin is administered, to create a predictable pattern for digestion and glucose regulation. In both cases, the goal is the same — avoid overfeeding, keep portions steady, and give the body a manageable amount of fuel at predictable times.

4. **Make movement part of their daily rhythm** — Your dog needs regular, heart-pumping movement to manage blood sugar and maintain a healthy weight. A few trips outside or pacing around the house isn't enough. Unless you're building in real exercise, most of their activity is short bursts followed by long stretches of rest, which doesn't raise the heart rate or burn off much energy. At minimum, aim for 20 minutes of aerobic movement each day.

A brisk walk, hike, or structured play sessions go a long way toward helping their muscles absorb glucose more efficiently and easing the load on insulin. Regular movement also helps prevent weight gain, which is one of the biggest drivers of insulin resistance.

5. **Create a consistent daily routine** — Dogs do best when their feeding and activity patterns stay steady from one day to the next. Predictability supports better digestion, hormone regulation, and overall metabolic rhythm, especially for dogs already prone to blood sugar swings.

By combining the proper nutrition, daily movement, and thoughtful support, you give your dog the best possible foundation for blood sugar stability and the strongest defense against diabetes.

Sources and References

<sup>1</sup> [VetHelp Direct, June 18, 2020](#)

<sup>2,16</sup> [Peter Dobias, Diabetes in Dogs - Treatment and Prevention - Holistic Approach](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Front Vet Sci. 2025 Jun 19:12:1595952](#)

<sup>4,5</sup> [MSD Manual, Diabetes Mellitus in Dogs and Cats](#)

<sup>6</sup> [PetMD, 10 Symptoms of Diabetes in Dogs](#)

<sup>7,9,10,17</sup> [Animal Wellness, June 19, 2025](#)

<sup>8</sup> [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, Cinnamon](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Mol Endocrinol. 2006 Apr;20\(4\):857-70](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Nutrients. 2022 Dec 21;15\(1\):18](#)

<sup>13,14,18</sup> [Pet Wellbeing, November 2021](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Nutrients. 2022 Dec 21;15\(1\):18](#)

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