

## Big Kitty, Big Heart

**Cat lover Suzanne Stowe blogs about Spunky, a diabetic cat who needs extra care, but is worth every minute.**

*By Suzanne Stowe*

Posted: Sept. 15, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Spunky weighs 25 pounds and is diabetic, but he patiently waits for his insulin shot every day. Over Labor Day weekend, I took care of one of my favorite kitties, Spunky. Spunky is a very special kitty. He has a condition called acromegaly and is a diabetic. He probably weighs at least 25 pounds but he is a sweetheart.

I've been taking care of Spunky for about three years now. At first, his mom told me he was just a big boy but this year his diagnosis was nailed down. I did a little research on acromegaly and found it usually occurs in males, ages 8-14. It is a tumor on the pituitary gland and it causes cats to gain weight because it affects growth hormones. I read that if a diabetic cat needs more than 20 units of insulin a day to control their blood sugar, there is a chance they have acromegaly.

Spunky seems to understand that the insulin shots he gets twice a day are good for him. He jumps up on the dining room table when you tell him it is time for his shot. If I pet him a little while, he sits down and waits for his shot patiently. After his shot he gets a few of his favorite treats.

Spunky's favorite thing is getting brushed. I spent at least a half-hour brushing him during the days that I care for him. He purrs loudly and especially loves to have his cheeks brushed. If I stop brushing, he looks at me and meows sweetly.

Spunky's condition causes him a few other problems, including a tendency to get constipated, so he gets a stool softener every meal. He has to be watched to make sure his blood sugar doesn't go too low, and his owner keeps corn syrup on hand in case he goes hypoglycemic. She also monitors his urine output to check if his blood sugar may be going too high and he frequently visits his veterinarian.

Spunky is lucky he is owned by someone who is willing to go the extra mile to give him the care he needs and the patience to deal with the extra care involved. Linda, his owner, is lucky to have a cat that appreciates the care he gets and the patience to put up with twice daily shots and other medications. I think they were meant for each other and I am glad I get to help with Spunky's care.