

## My Cat Has Stress-Related Hypoglycemia

**CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, discusses the difference between stress-related hypoglycemia and diabetes.**

*By Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

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**Q:** Recently I took my cat to the vet for a checkup. He did some bloodwork, and said that my cat's bloodwork was OK except that she had "stress related hypoglycemia" due to the stress of the drive to his office. He said her blood showed high glucose levels as well as her urine. He performed a fructosamine test and it was normal, meaning that over the prior three weeks her blood sugar was normal and that she was not diabetic. ...

She is 5 years old, spayed and never goes outside. She doesn't have excessive thirst nor is she eating a lot or losing weight. The vet says she is in perfect health, just a little overweight. How do I prevent her from having another episode of hypoglycemia when I take her in for her yearly check up next year? Thank you for your help.

**A:** You're confusing the terms hypoglycemia, which means low blood sugar, with hyperglycemia, which means high blood sugar. When cats get stressed out, like from a veterinary visit, their blood sugar levels will often rise. Because diabetes also causes elevated blood sugar levels, it can sometimes be tough to distinguish whether the cat is truly diabetic or not. Cats with diabetes have high levels of sugar in their urine, while cats with stress-induced hyperglycemia usually have no sugar in their urine.

Occasionally, cats with stress-related hyperglycemia will have a trace amount of sugar in their urine (yours apparently did), which again confuses the situation. Fortunately, there is a test called fructosamine. The fructosamine test measures the average blood sugar level over the previous two weeks. The fructosamine level is not affected by the transient increase in blood sugar that occurs during a single stressful incident, like a veterinary visit. The fact that your cat's fructosamine level was normal proves that your cat is not diabetic.

There really isn't much you can do to prevent stress-induced hyperglycemia if your cat finds veterinary visits stressful. But you do not have to worry about it. The transient increase in your cat's blood sugar has no deleterious effect whatsoever on your cat.