



Name: Charlie
Age: 8 Years
Breed: Cocker Spaniel

Diagnosis : Diabetes Mellitus



Introducing Charlie

Charlie is a happy and vocal cocker spaniel who has been coming to Bay Vets since he was a puppy. Last spring when our new Caton surgery opened, Charlie was one of our first patients. Charlie's owners were worried as he had been drinking more for a couple of weeks and seemed lethargic and unwell.

Diagnosis

The vet carried out a simple urine dipstick test on a sample from Charlie and found that there was a lot of glucose in his urine. This is known as glucosuria and is a symptom of diabetes mellitus whereby the body cannot produce enough insulin to lower blood glucose levels and so they stay dangerously high causing glucose to leak into the animal's urine. If left undiagnosed diabetes can cause serious damage to the body including recurring infections, strain on the heart and poor nutrition due to glucose not being absorbed from the blood stream.

Treatment

Thankfully for Charlie there is treatment available for diabetes in the form of insulin injections given twice daily under the skin. This was a big commitment for Charlie's owners to inject him twice daily. They also changed his food to a diabetic diet and brought him to the surgery regularly to have his blood glucose monitored. Blood glucose is monitored using a small machine called a glucometer which uses just a tiny pin prick of blood to assess the level of glucose in the blood. The level of glucose for a healthy non-diabetic dog should be around 3-7 however, in a dog with diabetes it can go above 30. A consistently high blood glucose can lead to the production of toxins and a life threatening condition known as diabetic ketoacidosis.

Charlie continued to have his blood glucose monitored as it fluctuated quite a lot and remained on the high side and so his insulin dosage had to be increased several times to bring his blood glucose under control.

Complications

There are various complications associated with diabetes and unfortunately Charlie experienced one of them this summer, as he developed cataracts in both of his eyes. This was very disturbing for Charlie and his owners as he couldn't see very well at all and so stopped playing with his ball and would walk into things. One of his eyes had to be surgically removed in an urgent procedure following the rupture of one of Charlie's cataracts causing him a lot of pain. The other eye has since been operated on by our ophthalmology specialist on our referrals team who specialises in pet eye care. An operation was done to correct the cataract in Charlie's one remaining eye and he is now doing really well.

Charlie's owners have had to go through an emotional roller coaster, as well as dealing with the financial implications and a lot of medicating with the injections, oral medications and topical eye drops. They often feel like they are never away from the vets! When Charlie was really poorly they were asked several times why they kept going with him however their hard work and Charlie's strength have pulled him through and he is now a happy diabetic dog who loves to play with his ball again! If diabetes is managed carefully with medication and regular checkups a dog can go on to live a normal and happy life. *(photo of Charlie as he is now)*