

10 Things to Know about the New Diabetes Drug for Cats

- 1** Bexacat™ (bexagliflozin), a sodium glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitor, is an FDA-approved once-a-day chewable tablet labeled as a treatment for feline diabetes.
- 2** SGLT2 inhibitors are not an “insulin pill.” They reduce blood glucose levels by preventing renal glucose absorption, but the body must still be able to make insulin. Therefore, they are not a suitable treatment for all diabetic cats.
- 3** Because the drug prevents glucose absorption in the kidneys, excess glucose will be shed in the urine—meaning urine glucose monitoring in patients on SGLT2 inhibitors won’t be useful measurements anymore: These cats are always going to be glucosuric. So far, there’s no evidence this makes them more prone to UTIs.
- 4** The odds of a cat becoming hypoglycemic on these drugs are almost zero. The whole practice team needs to know that their training in how to prevent hypoglycemia doesn’t apply to SGLT2 inhibitors.
- 5** Patient selection is highly important: It’s for mostly healthy, newly diagnosed diabetic cats.
- 6** This drug is NOT for cats who have other chronic conditions.
- 7** Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) will be harder to diagnose in cats on SGLT2 inhibitors because these cats are not going to present with hyperglycemia.
- 8** The vet team will need to educate clients on in how to spot signs of DKA in a cat on an SGLT2 inhibitor, because, although it’s rare, it still needs to be addressed quickly.
- 9** Main monitoring for cats on SGLT2 inhibitors will be blood ketone levels. A handheld ketone meter is essential for any practice planning to prescribe these drugs, and for any ER.
- 10** Cats on this drug will still need to be seen regularly by the veterinary team for regular exams, labwork, and client support.

