

CANINE DIABETES

A "FIRST PERSON" PERSPECTIVE

by: "Uncle Bill"

My name is Bill. I have two canine pals, Jackson and Mindy. They are both mixed Chihuahua breeds. They are my special family members. To them, I am known as "Uncle Bill". Yes, they love me unconditionally. It works both ways.

When Jackson was 4 years old, he was rushed to a local emergency veterinarian hospital the weekend before Christmas 2014. He was very sick with pancreatitis. He barely survived that episode but developed canine diabetes. He is now on insulin and a strict low fat diet that will help him continue to have a long, active life. His "Old Dog Diabetic Cookies" play an important part in his healthy life. More about that a little later.

Diabetic dogs can live healthy lives. Unfortunately, a common complication of diabetes in dogs is cataracts (cloudy lenses). In fact, 75% of dogs develop cataracts and blindness in both eyes within nine months of being diagnosed with canine diabetes. The cataracts can develop very quickly—sometimes overnight!

As a result of Jackson's diabetes, he became totally blind in both eyes from eye cataracts in just about 4 months.

However, jumping back just a bit, after Jackson's initial diagnosis of diabetes, he was put under the care of his personal veterinarian, and her experienced and caring staff.

One of the first things I had to learn, after Jackson's condition was stabilized, was how to administer his insulin injections. I too am diabetic. So I know how important the diet and the insulin injections are. Jackson's veterinarian was an excellent teacher demonstrating how easy it was to do the injections in the area along Jackson's back and above his shoulders. The insulin injections are given just slightly under the skin. The discomfort is minimal and after a few injections, Jackson became very de-sensitized. The injections are nearly painless for him. Jackson needs insulin injections twice a day. That is the same schedule for me. Jackson and I do our insulin injections together. Jackson's initial insulin dose was determined by his Veterinarian. Jackson gets his insulin injections about 15-30 minutes after his morning meal and his evening meal. It is important that your canine have a little food in the "tummy" before the insulin injections are administered.

In order to determine if the insulin dose is sufficient, it was necessary for Jackson's veterinarian to monitor his blood sugar level, his glucose. This usually requires a full 8-24 day with his veterinarian for a Canine Glucose Curve. Small blood samples are taken every two hours (after fasting, after meals and at random times) and compared throughout the day. This helps to determine if Jackson's insulin dose needs to be increased or decreased.

I eventually learned how to check Jackson's blood sugar levels at home with a canine "Blood Glucose Monitor". Jackson's veterinarian instructed me on how I could occasionally do the Glucose Curve for Jackson at home. According to the info I develop from this testing, I give to his veterinarian so they can evaluate Jackson's readings to determine if there is a required change in his daily insulin injections. I always leave the decision to change Jackson's insulin dose up to his professional health team.

Now, back to the issue of canine blindness caused by complications of diabetes. Jackson developed cataracts three months after his initial diagnosis of canine diabetes. The cloudiness from the cataract's came about over a four day period. Jackson was totally blind. Of course, I was warned that this condition would probably occur, but the actual reality is very disturbing. It is quite difficult to deal with at first and the options are limited on how or what to do.

Jackson was not in any apparent discomfort. He actually was quite resilient. I was surprised how rapidly he adjusted back to his normal surroundings and activities. He was a bit slower so bumping into things was limited. He still went outside in the back yard thru his doggie door, up and down some small back porch steps, and he could feel out his doggie steps that were access points to my bed and the living room couch. These were all familiar routines that he did every day before he lost his sight. He could still get around quite well on his own.

Canine cataracts have to be monitored diligently since they can develop into a serious condition that could require your pet to have one or both eyes surgically removed. Be sure your veterinarian is equipped with the medical tools and knowledge to occasionally check your canine's eye pressure.

My next step, after Jackson lost his sight, was to evaluate the options that were available to me to make sure that he could maintain a good degree of "Quality of Life" for his remaining years. One of the main factors for this consideration was that Jackson was a very young and active four year old canine. If there was a way to make Jackson's youthful life more functional and comfortable, that would be the only path I would consider.

That option, for Jackson's health and future welfare, was canine cataract surgery and the restoration of his sight. This is a surgical procedure very similar to cataract surgery in humans. The surgery can be performed in one or both eyes. Canine cataract surgery is a very expensive endeavor. The decision to have this surgery for Jackson was very easy for me. Coming up with the finances was very difficult. Of course, each case of canine cataract surgery is different, but to have sight restored in both eyes it could cost as much as \$6,000-\$10,000. There is usually a \$300-\$400 fee for an initial examination/evaluation just to make sure your canine is qualified for the cataract surgery. After the surgery, Jackson was required to have special eye drops administered, probably for the rest of his life. There are a number of follow-up visits that are not usually included in the cost of the surgery. Be sure to add up all the costs. The surgery outcome is not guaranteed to be 100% successful.

I am happy to report that Jackson has been fully sighted for over a year now. He is a playful, loving member of my family. He runs, he jumps, and he chases his kitty and loves his canine partner Mindy.

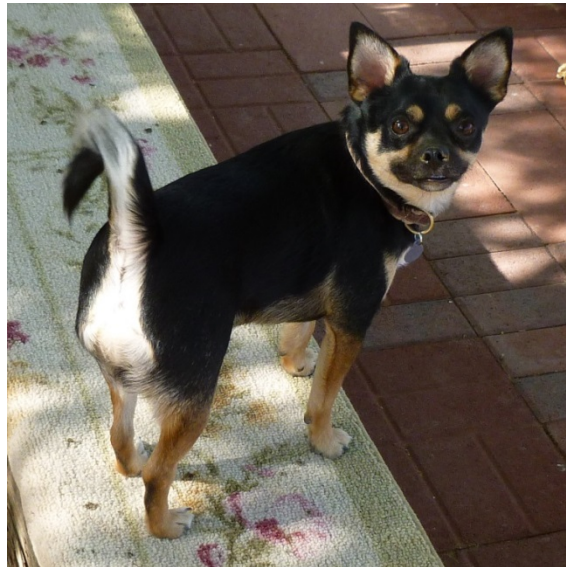


Jackson: About one hour before his scheduled cataract surgery on May 5, 2015 (left). About two weeks after his cataract surgery on June 8, 2015, fully sighted, at his home in North Edwards, California (right).

One of the ways that I have to make Jackson's life more healthy and fun is his "Old Dog Diabetic Cookies". Always, when it is time for his twice-a-day medications, his insulin injections and eye drops, he gets an Old Dog Diabetic Cookie treat before and after each medicine application. This cookie treat excites him so much he has learned that med times are just a rewarded game. It makes me feel so good to have his Old Dog Cookie treats help make this procedure more like a game than a requirement. I love him like I would any family member and he trusts me to do what is good for him.

In one year alone, Jackson will need over 700 insulin injections. Now add up how great it is to have the Old Dog Diabetic Cookie for all those reward times. The Old Dog Cookie Company is producing a wonderful product that is helping to keep my special canine pal healthy and happy. It makes me feel good that I have a healthy canine product that I trust, that I know really works, and will be there for Jackson and me for years to come.

OLD DOG COOKIE COMPANY.....Keep up the good work!



Jackson- 4 years old - November 2014 - Before his Diabetes



Jackson's most recent photo