

Treatment of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease

Moisture is imperative to urinary tract health. Cats with histories of urinary tract stones, cystitis, urinary tract infections, and other urinary tract disorders should be fed all wet food, canned or raw.

For more information, please visit www.felineoutreach.org.



Feline Outreach Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the care of companion animals, specifically cats.

The information contained is for general informational purposes only, and is no substitute for your own research or the advice of a veterinarian.

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Pee Problems



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Stones

Urine is composed of water and sediment, byproducts filtered out by the kidneys. A urinalysis will determine urine's specific gravity. The specific gravity measures how much of the urine is composed of sediment. If the urine is composed of too much sediment, or high specific gravity, stones may develop. There are two common forms of stones. One forms when the urine is too acidic (pH is too low), the other when the urine is too alkaline (pH is too high). Crystals may form in urine within 30 minutes after collection, creating a false positive, so diagnosis should be done promptly and carefully.

If a cat is straining to urinate and not producing urine, it may have a life-threatening blockage and should be taken to a veterinarian immediately. A blockage can cause death within hours. Surgery may be needed to remove the stones.

Cystitis or Inflammation

Cystitis is simply inflammation of the urinary tract. It may result in blood in the urine and frequent urination, perhaps of small amounts. In many cases, the cause is stress or is unknown. It may occur in conjunction with stones or infection, or alone. Cystitis generally resolves on its own in a few days. Antibiotics are unnecessary and will not shorten the duration of cystitis.

Bacterial infections

The symptoms of a bacterial urinary tract infection are similar to cystitis. Bacterial urinary tract infections are rare in cats that do not have diabetes or kidney disease. Most cases are cystitis. Diagnosis should be done using a culture & sensitivity (C&S). Urine should be collected through a needle inserted into the bladder (cystocentesis) to avoid any contamination of the sample from urine on the cat's fur or collection container used.

Anesthesia is not necessary for the procedure. A C&S will identify the type of bacteria present, and the best antibiotic for treatment. Overuse of antibiotics is detrimental, so a C&S is imperative for differentiating a bacterial infection from cystitis. Both conditions can result in blood as well as white blood cells to be present in the urine

Finally

Urinary tract stones, cystitis (urinary tract inflammation), and bacterial urinary tract infections are all more likely to be avoided by feeding an all-wet diet, canned or raw. Dry food exacerbates urinary tract problems by increasing the urine's specific gravity and decreasing the volume of water flushing out sediment, decreasing the frequency it is flushed out. An all-canned diet has been shown more effective at preventing urinary tract stones than prescription dry food.

Meal-feeding, rather than free-feeding, helps maintain a proper pH balance in cats' urine.

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