



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2014 NEWSLETTER

DISEASES OF THE LOWER URINARY TRACT IN FELINES

Feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) is the term used for a variety of conditions that can affect your kitty's bladder and urethra. These conditions include urinary tract infections, formation of urinary crystals or stones in the bladder or urethra, or idiopathic cystitis (inflammation of the urinary bladder wall). In some cases, cancer may be an underlying cause of lower urinary tract disease.

The majority of symptoms are similar for all these conditions, and may include blood in the urine, straining to urinate, vocalizing during urination, and increased frequency of urination. Some cats may also excessively lick their genital areas, or potty outside the box. They may also rest on cool surfaces, such as tiled floors or bathtubs, or hide out in places they don't normally visit.

If your kitty becomes "blocked," meaning they cannot pass urine at all (or can only pass a very small amount), this is an emergency, and it's important that you seek immediate veterinary care. If untreated, a blockage can quickly become fatal.

There are a number of potential causes for lower urinary tract disease. Urinary crystals may be caused by stress, including seasonal changes such as the ones we're currently experiencing in our city. Changes in environment (such as moving, or a new human or animal family member) can also trigger this condition.

Another common culprit is change in diet, as anything your kitty eats (or ingests while grooming) can affect the pH level of his or her urine. When the pH is too low or too high, crystals or stones can form. Even though premium cat foods can benefit your

kitty nutritionally, they still have the potential to foster a urine pH level that's outside the ideal range. It's important that you monitor your kitty's urine output (decreased urine volume may signal a partial or full blockage). We also recommend that your kitty regularly receives a urinalysis test, especially if you've introduced a new food (or new treats), as this can allow us to detect crystals at an early stage.

Diagnosis for lower urinary tract diseases typically begins with laboratory blood work and urinalysis. We may recommend a more specialized test, called urine culture and sensitivity, to determine if bacteria is growing in the urine and which antibiotic it may best respond to. Additional diagnostics may include x-rays or ultrasound.

Treatment will depend on diagnosis, but may include antibiotics for infection, food changes or medications to control the urine's pH level, medications to alleviate inflammation and pain, or other medications to address specific conditions.

If your kitty does experience a blockage, it may be necessary to have a urinary catheter placed. In some cases, a male kitty may also need perineal urethrostomy (PU) surgery. This procedure removes part of the urethra, creating a larger opening from the body which is less susceptible to blockage.

If you notice your kitty experiencing any symptoms associated with lower urinary tract disease, please contact us right away.



FELINE VACCINATIONS

Vaccinating your kitty against the most common and deadly cat diseases is one of the most important ways to keep your cat healthy. A vaccination boosts your kitty's immune system by preparing it to combat a specific disease in the future.

Feline vaccinations fall into two categories: core vaccines (ones that are recommended for most cats), and ancillary vaccines (recommended by a veterinarian only for a small percentage of cats). The Sacramento Cat Hospital prides itself on using only PUREVAX non-adjuvanted vaccines. Many vaccines are adjuvanted, meaning they contain an additive to help the cat's body absorb the vaccine. Unfortunately, adjuvanted vaccines have been shown to cause inflammation or even cancerous tumors at the injection site.

If your kitty is current on their annual exam but due for vaccinations, you can bring him or her to one of our walk-in vaccination clinics, held every Wednesday and Saturday from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

For more information about our vaccination clinic, including PUREVAX vaccine fees, please ask us for a copy of our vaccination clinic handout.

MARCH SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through March 31, receive **\$25 off a feline urinalysis test** when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam. Please ask us for details.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our team members.

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