



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

## DISEASES OF THE LOWER URINARY TRACT IN FELINES

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

A 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 (on clothing, furniture, carpets, floors, etc.). They may also rest on cool surfaces, such as tiled floors or bathtubs, or hide out in a place they don't normally go.

If the kitty becomes "blocked," meaning they cannot pass urine at all (or can only pass a very small quantity), this is an emergency, and it's important that you seek immediate veterinary attention. 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; changes in environment (such as moving, new human or animal family members); and changes in food. Stones may form from an abundance of crystals building up.

Idiopathic cystitis is not fully understood, and may involve several body systems along with the urinary system. Urinary tract infections may occur due to natural factors such as decreased concentration of urine, resulting in a urinary tract that is more susceptible to bacterial infection. Cancer may

form from normal cells in the bladder wall that, over time, change into abnormal or cancerous cells.

Diagnosis for lower urinary tract diseases typically starts with laboratory blood work and a 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 workups 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, and other medications to address specific conditions.

If your kitty does experience a blockage, (more common in male kitties than females), 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.

Ways to help reduce occurrences of lower urinary tract disease include:

- Feeding small meals on a frequent basis (this is debatable topic, but can also help control regurgitation).
- For cats with a history of crystal or stone formation, feed diets that promote urine that is acidic or alkaline, based on the type of crystals that were formed.
- Provide clean, fresh water at all times.
- Provide an adequate number of litter boxes; the rule of thumb is, one more litter box than the number of cats.
- Keep litter boxes in quiet, safe areas.
- Keep litter boxes clean.
- Minimize major changes in routine.

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



## ABVP CERTIFIES DR. IRENE FUJISHIMA NAKAOKA IN FELINE PRACTICE

Our very own Dr. Irene Fujishima Nakaoka has been certified as a Diplomate, American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (Feline Practice).

Dr. Irene is the only veterinarian in Sacramento to achieve this certification; in the state of California, there are just 12 veterinarians certified by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP) in this specialty area.

Dr. Irene mastered a rigorous and demanding application process and certification examination in order to achieve Diplomate status. In order to sit for the extensive, two-day examination, a veterinarian must complete either a residency program or six years of clinical veterinary practice. Two case reports, references, descriptions of practice procedures, and professional education records must also be submitted to the ABVP, and pass review.

All of us at the Sacramento Cat Hospital extend our congratulations to Dr. Irene for her achievement.



## JANUARY SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through January 31, receive \$20 off any lab work, including a recommended annual test for Feline Leukemia/Feline AIDS/heartworm, when you bring your kitty in for a wellness exam.

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