

Feline Urinary Issues

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease, or FLUTD for short, is a common issue in cats. It is a general term used to describe any disease of the urinary tract in cats, and often presents as straining, painful urination, and hematuria (blood in the urine). The cause can be difficult to determine, but FLUTD can be caused by a number of things including uroliths (bladder stones), crystals in the urine, diet, environmental factors such as stress and reduced activity levels, or a true bacterial infection (fairly uncommon in cats). It may also be idiopathic (no known cause). Older cats are more prone to a true bacterial urinary tract infection than younger cats. While both males and females are at risk for FLUTD, males have a greater likelihood of developing a urinary tract blockage, which can become life-threatening very quickly if not immediately addressed by a veterinarian.

Signs of FLUTD may include (but are not limited to):

- Frequent trips to the litterbox
- Blood present in urine (you may notice a pinkish color to the urine or drops of blood in the litterbox or in a cool spot, such as a sink or bath tub)
- Straining or vocalization during urination
- Excessive licking of the genital area
- Urinating outside of the litterbox



If you notice that your cat is straining or vocalizing while urinating or urinating only small amounts at a time, regardless of whether blood is present or not, s/he should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible as these may be the signs of a very serious problem. If you have a male cat that is not producing any urine at all, this is an emergency situation and must be seen by a veterinarian immediately.



Encouraging your cat to drink more water, feeding him/her a high quality diet, and ensuring that his/her environment is low-stress and enjoyable can help prevent and aid in the recovery from urinary disease. Make sure to provide plenty of fresh drinking water in a variety of locations and to incorporate a wet food into his/her diet. If your cat is prone to FLUTD, feeding a canned food diet only (or a prescription diet from your veterinarian, especially if your cat is prone to having crystals in his/her urine) may be necessary. It's becoming increasingly common for veterinarians to recommend feeding canned food exclusively to increase water consumption regardless of your cat's medical history. If you have further questions or concerns or if the animal you are adopting has a history of FLUTD, please use your free vet voucher to discuss urinary health and urinary tract diseases with your veterinarian.