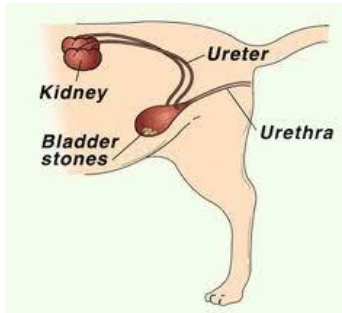


Feline lower urinary tract disease



What is feline lower urinary tract disease?

Feline lower urinary tract disease is any condition affecting the bladder or urethra of cats.

What are the signs of urinary tract disease?

The signs of urinary tract disease in cats include:

- Frequent urination and urination in unusual places
- Productive or non-productive straining to urinate
- Vocalisation whilst urinating
- Blood in the urine
- Excessive licking of the penis or vulva



What causes lower urinary tract disease?

There are several conditions that can affect the lower urinary tract of cats and because treatment will vary depending on the condition, it is important for us to determine what is causing the clinical signs in your cat. Any of these conditions can occur together.

-Urinary tract infections – This is more common in older cats, especially cats with underlying kidney disease, diabetes or thyroid problems. It may also occur in cats with bladder stones.



-Bladder stones

-Urethral obstruction – This is the most serious type of lower urinary tract disease, and tends to occur only in male cats as they have a longer, narrower urethra. The urethra can become blocked with inflammatory material, crystals and small bladder stones, and untreated obstructions can quickly become life-threatening. Non-productive straining and pain, lethargy, reluctance to eat are

the main signs of a urethral obstruction and any cats with these signs need to receive veterinary attention immediately.

-Feline idiopathic cystitis-The most common problem affecting younger cats and the cause of this is unknown. It is believed that anxiety and stress can release hormones that can cause irritation to the bladder wall and lead to significant inflammation and pain. Cats that are obese, anxious, indoors and on a dry only diet are more prone to this condition.

How can feline lower urinary tract disease be treated?

Treatment will depend on the type of disease we have diagnosed and may consist of:

- Antibiotic** therapy for urinary tract infections
- Surgical intervention** for bladder stones or urethral obstruction
- Pain relief**
- Dietary management.** A special diet can be beneficial in the treatment and prevention of urinary tract disease by encouraging additional water consumption, influencing the pH of the urine and reducing the concentration of compounds in the urine that can often result in the formation of crystals or stones.



- Glucosamine** – injections of glucosamine can help reduce inflammation in the bladder wall and alleviate the pain associated with some forms of urinary tract disease

How can I prevent further episodes of lower urinary tract disease in my cat?

Prevention will vary depending on your cat's individual condition but may include:

- Long term **dietary management** and urinary monitoring



- Encouraging **water** consumption. This reduces the likelihood your cat will get crystals or stones forming in the bladder and can minimize the chance of further episodes. Ways to do this include feeding a urinary diet; leaving access to a dripping tap or use of a special cat water fountain as cats often prefer running water; feeding a wet diet or adding water to dry diets.

- Management of anxiety or stress.** This may include anticipating an upcoming stressful situation and discussing appropriate ways of minimizing stress in this time. Some non-drug therapies may be useful, or we may recommend short or long term medications to alleviate stress in your cat.

- Encouraging activity**-a healthy body weight and physical activity can help to reduce the risk of further episodes of feline lower urinary tract disease. Toys that dispense food may encourage cats to play, but increased interaction with you can be the best way of ensuring good activity levels.

My Vets Irrawang
3/17 Port Stephens Street
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
49871898

My Vets Thornton
3/30 Railway Avenue
Thornton NSW 2322
49661133

www.myvets.vet



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