



# FELINE LOWER URINARY TRACT DISEASE

## What is FLUTD?

Feline lower urinary tract disease or FLUTD is a common syndrome in cats, consisting of several presenting signs. These include squatting frequently to urinate but not expressing much urine, pain on urination or passing blood stained urine. Sometimes crystals can be present in the urine and this can cause problems in male cats, as the bladder can become blocked making the cat unable to pass any urine. This is a potentially life threatening condition when it gets to this stage and veterinary treatment should be sought immediately. The lesser degrees of the FLUTD syndrome are not life threatening but still mean your cat is in considerable discomfort.

## Factors shown to be important in the development of this syndrome are:

**Diet** - high levels of magnesium and phosphorus can cause the development of crystals in the bladder and the crystal development is also more common in alkaline urine, so a diet that makes the urine more acidic is beneficial.

**Body condition** - the syndrome is more commonly seen in *overweight* cats

**Lifestyle** - cats in a multi cat household, indoor cats, cats that don't like using dirty litter trays, cats that don't drink much water and cats that are stressed are more likely to develop FLUTD

**Gender** - FLUTD is potentially more life threatening and symptoms are more easily seen in *male* cats although both sexes are prone to the syndrome.



## Symptoms to look for

- Increased frequency of urination but passing only small amounts
- Squatting to pass urine but not passing any
- Pain and vocalising on urination
- Straining to pass urine (looks constipated)
- Urinating in unusual places or the cat appearing not to be housetrained anymore
- Restlessness
- Listlessness/lethargy
- Hiding
- Lack of appetite
- Vomiting.

If your cat is showing any of these signs, he/she needs to be seen by your veterinarian. If you can bring a urine sample to the clinic it is usually very helpful as the veterinarian will need to test the cat's urine for crystals, blood and signs of infection and institute appropriate treatment as needed.

## Treatment

Treatment of this condition depends on a variety of factors including how severe it is, if it has happened before, if the cat can urinate and what is the cause. In most cases where infection is the only cause then antibiotics are usually the treatment of choice. Sometimes other drugs can be given to help relax the muscles of the bladder and encourage urination. If bladder stones or crystals are involved there may be a requirement for a special diet - this may include hills c/d, hills s/d or walthams urinary tract support. The choice of diet will depend on the individual case. In more severe cases where the cat is not urinating surgery will be required to unblock the bladder and usually a hospital stay is needed. In these cases it is usually a life threatening condition and needs to be managed with care. Cats that have had one episode of FLUTD are often more at risk for having it happen again.