

Lower Urinary Tract Disease in Feline Patients

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is a name used to refer to a collection of conditions that can have effects on the urinary system in cats. There are several predisposing factors that may cause a patient to exhibit signs of lower urinary tract disease. Many of these factors are highly related to the stress levels the cat may experience in their daily life.

Whilst we may consider our feline companions fairly laid back, they may be experiencing high levels of stress in the following situations:

- A change in the house/home environment
- Sharing resources
- Living in a multi-cat household

Some cats may develop Feline Idiopathic Cystitis (FIC) and the development of bladder stones (urolithiasis) or even go on to develop a urethral blockage.

Signs of FLUTD

- Difficulty passing urine or finding urination painful
- Increased frequency of urination and often in unusual places
- Blood in their urine
- Behavioural changes (irritation or aggression)
- Overgrooming of their back end



Treatment of FLUTD

It is often managed medically with a combination of treatments, helping to combat the underlying causes and clinical signs. This can include anti-inflammatory pain killers, muscle relaxants and supplements (glycosaminoglycans) to help to repair the building blocks of the bladder and to keep cats calm.

In some cases, FLUTD may lead to a complete blockage of the urinary tract, leaving your cat unable to pass any urine. In these cases the patient is still producing urine that is being stored in their bladder, but the urine has no way to leave the body due to the blockage. This can have serious consequences for the body's organ function, especially the kidneys, and a "blocked bladder" can be fatal if left untreated.

Signs of urinary blockage

- Restlessness
- Vocalisation
- Straining to urinate and only passing small amounts or not passing any urine

All cases of suspected urinary blockage are a medical emergency and you should contact us as soon as possible.

Treatment of a urinary blockage

A catheter is placed into the urethra with the patient under general anaesthetic. This catheter helps to empty the bladder whilst medication is started to help reduce the cause of the blockage. The catheter may remain present for several days to allow any inflammation to reduce.

It is also important to perform some basic blood test, urinalysis and also imaging to try and determine if there is a cause for the urinary blockage.

In severe or recurrent cases with complete urethral obstruction in males, a surgical procedure called a perineal urethrostomy (PU) may be recommended to widen the opening to the urethra to allow them to urinate through a wider orifice like a female.

Techniques to reduce feline stress

- **Cats don't like to share:**
 - Cats don't like to share resources and especially litter trays
 - We would advise to have 1 extra litter tray for each cat in your household
- **Access to water:**
 - Cats love drinking from running water so having a water fountain may help your cats drinking habits
 - It is important that your cat has plenty of access to water

- If your cat is not keen on drinking water then feeding them a wet food diet or adding water to their dry food may help



- **Dietary management:**

- Some diets are specifically tailored to help reduce stress
- There are also diet to reduce the build up of bladder stones

For cats with urinary issues, regular urinalysis can be helpful to monitor response to treatment.

To book in for your cat in for a health check, please call us on 01423 228080 or visit www.clarohillvets.co.uk.