

Urinary Disease

Lower urinary diseases are a collection of conditions that affect the bladder and urethra. Cats of any age, breed, or sex can be affected by these diseases. Urinary obstructions, which can be life threatening, occur almost exclusively in male cats.

Signs your cat may be suffering from urinary disease include straining to urinate, blood in the urine, urinating small amounts of urine frequently, excessive time in the litter box, excessive grooming at the genital area, or urinating/defecating outside of the litter box, especially on cold smooth surfaces such as a bathtub. If any of these signs are present, an immediate exam should be performed.

There are three types of urinary diseases: interstitial cystitis, bladder crystals/stones, and urethral obstruction.

Interstitial cystitis is when there is blood in the urine but there are no bacteria or white blood cells. This is often a result of stress and is the most common urinary disease in cats. This disease can be self-limiting, but often treatments are initiated to prevent secondary infections, to control pain, and to prevent recurrence, which is common.

Urinary crystals and stones. Crystals can occur from dietary factors. When there are enough crystals in the urine they can form stones, which are a rock-hard collection of minerals. These are painful as they rub against the bladder wall. If a stone becomes lodged in the urethra, urine cannot pass and the bladder becomes distended and very painful.

There are two types of stones, one of which can be treated medically, and one that requires surgery. Recurrence is common and special diets can help minimize future risk.

Urethral obstruction occurs mostly in male cats and can be fatal if not addressed immediately. These can be from stones or urethral plugs. Signs of an obstruction are similar to other signs of urinary disease but become more serious as the disease progresses. Additional signs can



Urinary Disease, continued...

be: painful crying when attempting to urinate, no urine voided, sleeping in the litter box, depression/lethargy, vomiting, low body temperature, or shock.

Treatment options vary depending on which disease is present. Interstitial cystitis and crystals/stones can potentially be treated at home. Due to the severity of urethral obstruction, intensive hospitalization is needed. Diets can be helpful in preventing or reducing risk of recurrence in these disease processes.

*** It is imperative to bring your pet in at the first sign of any potential urinary disease for proper diagnosis and treatment, as a urethral obstruction is an EMERGENCY situation. ***

Cat Clinic of NE Seattle
1539 1/2 Northeast 145th St.
Seattle, WA. 98155