

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD)

Urine produced in a healthy urinary tract contains a great deal of dissolved materials. In cats with feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD), mineral crystals collect in the urinary tract, especially the bladder and its outflow tract (urethra). The accumulating crystals irritate the lining of the urinary tract and may clump together or form “stones” in the bladder or obstruct the outflow of urine. Obstructions are relatively common in male cats and may be fatal if not treated promptly.

Signs of FLUTD include excessive licking of the genitals, frequent voiding of small amounts of urine, urinating in unusual locations, blood in the urine, straining or evidence of pain during urination and unproductive attempts to urinate. Total urinary obstruction results in depression, lack of appetite, vomiting and eventually coma and death.

Despite intense study, no single cause for FLUTD has been discovered. Diet, inadequate water intake, bacteria, viruses and stress may all be involved. Surgical neutering does not cause FLUTD.

Important Points in Treatment

1. **FLUTD can be an emergency** and prompt treatment is essential. Many cats require hospitalization for treatment. Treatment is designed to relieve the obstruction, flush the crystalline material from the urinary tract, treat any infections, correct any fluid imbalances and institute preventive dietary therapy. Despite treatment, some cats die from irreversible kidney damage.
2. While most cats respond to prompt treatment, the obstruction recurs in some cats within a few days or weeks. In some male cats with recurring disease, surgical enlargement of the urinary tract opening (perineal urethrostomy) is desirable.
3. Give all medications as directed. Call the doctor if you cannot give the medication.
4. Dietary control is essential to the treatment and prevention of FLUTD. Diet designed to treat or prevent FLUTD contain minimum mineral levels and cause increased water consumption and production of acidic urine. Acidic urine tends to prevent formation of mineral crystals. Some recommended diets are:

Hill's Prescription Diet C/D
Hill's Science Diet Feline Maintenance
Purina CNM/UR

Purina Special Care
Friskies Special Diet
9 Lives Plus Care