



FLUTD

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease

FLUTD is an umbrella term that refers to cats who present with one or more of the following symptoms:

- Straining to urinate
- Increased frequency of urination
- Bloody urine
- Urinating outside of the litter tray
- Vocalizing while urinating
- Over-grooming (especially around the groin region)
- Behavioural changes including aggression, irritability & urine marking

If your cat is a male (entire or desexed) and exhibits any of the aforementioned symptoms, it is imperative that you seek **immediate veterinary advice**. Male cats are at risk of developing a 'blocked bladder' which means that they are no longer able to pass urine. As urination is an important method of getting rid of the body's waste products the toxins begin to build up inside your cat and without treatment the disease can be fatal within 24 hours.

Regardless of whether your cat is male or female, there are a number of possible disease processes that can lead to FLUTD and it is important that you discuss the details of your cat's specific habits with a member of our team. After collecting a history & examining your cat we will collect and analyse a urine sample to help us better understand what's going on.

Depending on our initial findings, we may put your cat on pain relief medications and/or antibiotics. We may also recommend further testing to help us search for an underlying cause for your cat's medical troubles.

Unfortunately, for many cats with FLUTD, there is no cure and the problem may be ongoing with your cat suffering from 'episodes' of this disease from time-to-time. Cats most at risk of this particular form of FLUTD are typically indoor cats from multi-cat households, although any cat is susceptible. There is strong evidence that links FLUTD with stress, and often just a single stressful episode such as a change in routine or dirty litter tray can be enough to get the ball rolling. Usually these 'episodes' are short lived and there are a number of changes you can make at home to help decrease the frequency and severity of the problems.

Suggestions to reduce the risk of recurrent urinary tract problems at home:

Food

- wet food is preferable to dry biscuits
- Changes in diet can be stressful. Ensure the transition to a new food is done very gradually, allowing your cat time to adjust to the change
- If your cat is particularly fussy, try warming the food slightly
- Food & water sources should be away from litter trays and away from any noisy or busy areas.

Water

- Ensure there is constant access to numerous sources of fresh water
- Shallow ceramic bowls are best
- Water fountains can be used to encourage drinking
- Flavoured water can be used to encourage drinking (chicken, tuna)
- Food & water sources should be away from litter trays and away from any noisy or busy areas.

Litter

- Ensure there is at least one litter tray for every cat +1 (i.e. 2 cats should have 3 litter trays)
- Ensure the litter trays are away from noisy or busy areas
- Offer a variety of different litter substrates
- Have at least one extra large litter tray (ideally 30 x 60 cm or larger)

Environment

- Attempt to minimize or avoid any identified stress triggers (conflict with another pet, change in diet, change in routine, overcrowding, owner stress, additional people in the house, etc). The most common cause of stress to cats is some form of conflict with another household cat. This stress is often not detected by the owners.
- Strive to provide environmental enrichment. This is particularly important for indoor cats:
 - Playing with them, providing toys
 - Allow outdoor access, in a run or enclosure if necessary
 - Add scratching posts, elevated perches, hiding places, plants and so forth. In multi-cat households ensure there are enough resources such that all cats have access at all times.
 - Ask us about *Feliway*, a calming hormone which can help to settle stressed cat

FLUTD can be a frustrating disease but with careful management at home and appropriate veterinary care most cats can live a relatively normal life. In addition, many cats will settle with age begin to show a natural decrease in both the frequency and severity of episodes.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this disease, or about your cat's health in general, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our friendly staff members.