

URINARY PROBLEMS IN CATS

A common problem for cats is Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD), an inflammation of the lining of the bladder and/or urethra. It's caused by the formation of struvite mineral deposits in the urinary tract. Symptoms are increased frequency of urination and discomfort and strain during urination due to a partial blockage of the urethra. Blood in the urine, crying in the litter box and urinating outside the box are tip-offs. It's most common in neutered males, but occurs in females as well. If left untreated, total blockage may occur, resulting in death. A cat with symptoms of FLUTD should be seen right away by a veterinarian, who can unblock the passages and will often prescribe an antibiotic to combat any secondary bladder infection.



DIETARY FACTORS:

Since both the causes and the prevention of this problem are dietary in nature, cats should be fed a diet aimed at preventing the onset of this condition.

1. FEED A CAT FOOD HIGH IN ANIMAL PROTEIN.

Flesh foods maintain an acidic pH in the urinary tract, keeping the minerals dissolved in the urine so they can be excreted out. Most dry foods are high in grain proteins, which are alkalizing. Meat-based foods are better than grain-based foods! Raw meat diets are best at preventing FLUTD, followed by canned foods, which contain more meat and fewer grains than dry food.

2. FEED A CAT FOOD LOW IN ASH AND MAGNESIUM.

"Ash" refers to the total mineral content of a food. It gets its name from the laboratory procedure used to measure mineral content—burning a sample at high heat until nothing is left but the mineral ash. The major minerals calcium, phosphorus and magnesium are all necessary for life, so "ashless" cat food is not desirable. The right amount and balance of minerals are necessary. Excessive minerals, and especially excessive magnesium (a major component of the struvite crystals) are thought to be underlying factors

in FLUTD. In dry foods look for less than 7% ash and 1% magnesium. In wet foods (containing 78% water) look for less than 1.5% ash and 0.02% magnesium.

3. USE A SUPPLEMENT THAT PROMOTES GOOD URINARY HEALTH.

Vitamin C is a natural urinary acidifier, and cranberry extract can prevent harmful bacteria from attaching to the bladder wall to cause infection. These ingredients are combined with highly active digestive enzymes in **Enzymes for Cats**, our supplement for cats prone to urinary infections. **Animals Apawthecary Tinkle Tonic** is an herbal tincture that can reduce inflammation and fight infection in the urinary tract.

4. MAKE SURE YOUR CAT DRINKS ENOUGH WATER.

Dilution of the urine is a frequently overlooked factor in FLUTD. Cats who only eat dry food may be chronically dehydrated, without sufficient fluids in their systems to flush the kidneys. In nature, cats get most of their fluids from their juicy prey, and don't have an instinct for water drinking. The simplest route to correcting dehydration is to feed a wet food diet, or provide a cascading water fountain that encourages cats to drink. Place water away from food, because cats are more likely to use a water source away from their "kill."



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