



Feline Urinary Tract Disease

Inappropriate urination (abnormal amount or location), straining to urinate, blood in the urine and being unable to urinate are all a part of a disease category called Feline Urinary Tract Disease (FUTD). This disease is frequently seen in young to middle aged cats. Both male and female cats are affected, but males are more likely to have an obstruction of the urinary tract. Despite extensive research, the Veterinary profession has yet to develop a complete understanding of the cause and treatment of the disease.

For simplicity, FUTD can be divided into two commonly seen syndromes:

1.) **FUS - Feline Urinary Tract Syndrome**. This is the most understood syndrome in which crystals form in the urine causing irritation, straining and occasionally obstructions. The formation of these crystals is primarily related to the diet and the acidity of the urine. Some cats may have bacteria and blood in the urine as well.

Treatment:

Treatment is aimed at treating the bacterial component with antibiotics and controlling/dissolving the crystals with a prescription diet. Occasionally these crystals form small plugs or stones which may obstruct the urinary tract - preventing the cat from emptying its bladder. This is a life threatening condition and the blockage must be removed by passing a urinary catheter under anesthesia.

Prognosis:

The prognosis for cats with FUS is fair to excellent, depending on if there are complications such as an obstruction, urethral spasming, or stones. Once diagnosed, treated and fed a prescribed diet, a large percentage of these cats will do well. The most common cause for recurrence is changing the diet. Recheck appointments are important in managing this disease and will help improve the prognosis.

2.) **IDHP - Idiopathic Dysuria - Hematuria - Pollakiuria**. This syndrome is more complex and less understood. Dysuria means painful or difficult urination. Hematuria refers to blood in the urine. Pollakiuria means frequent urination. These cats have recurrent episodes which last about 5-7 days. The urine generally has a lot of blood present, but no white blood cells, crystals or bacteria. The time between recurrences varies between individuals, but may be precipitated by stress. These cats can also obstruct from blood clots or mucous plugs (similar to the FUS crystal plugs).

Treatment:

Treatment is very controversial. Some sources say these cats improve within 5 - 7 days regardless of treatment. In our experience, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic medications are effective in certain cases and are recommended on an individual basis. Dietary therapy does not seem to be as important of a factor with this syndrome.

Prognosis:

Unfortunately there is no way to predict the severity or frequency of recurring symptoms. A small percentage of cats have signs that persist for extended periods and require further work-up of the urinary tract disease such as an ultrasound, x-rays, or biopsies.

Both FUS and IDHP are diagnosed through physical exams, clinical signs, history, and urinalysis. Early diagnosis and treatment is important and often improves the prognosis. The doctors at the Lodi Veterinary Hospital are carefully watching the literature for any updated information on Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease, and are very willing to answer any questions that you may have regarding this complex disease.