



**Good Friends
Animal
Hospital**

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Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is a syndrome that many people refer to as cystitis or bladder problems in cats. The symptoms are bloody urine, painful and more frequent urination, straining to urinate and urinating outside the litter box. Frequently there are crystals in the urine and a buildup of sandy material in the bladder. This material can lodge in the penis and cause an obstruction of male cats. When this occurs, the cat cannot urinate at all and may sit in the litter box trying to urinate. This is an emergency and the cat needs to be examined immediately. Female cats are just as susceptible to developing the syndrome, but don't get obstructed. Bladder stones can also develop.

The syndrome is usually not caused by an infection but is an inflammatory problem. The latest research indicates that stress is a major component and cause.

When your cat is exhibiting symptoms of FLUTD, we will recommend having a urine sample checked to make sure it is not a behavioral problem. We may recommend a culture of the urine to rule out an infection. An x-ray may be advised to check for stones.

Treatment consists of antibiotics, at times, and pain medication. A special prescription diet can help to prevent recurrences by decreasing crystal formation. Additional water intake is extremely helpful. Only canned food should be fed and you can add additional water to the food. Some cats will prefer water fountains or a different shape dish and will drink more. Increased water intake helps to dilute the urine and flush the bladder out. If stones are present, surgery is usually needed.

It is also advised that you enrich your cat's environment. Add toys and objects to encourage your cat to play and explore. Climbing towers and hiding places can also help. Get a laser pointer and have your cat chase the red light! If you have several cats in the house, give them all some private space. Everything you can do to make your cat happier will have a beneficial effect!