



Coastal Vets

COASTAL VETERINARY SERVICES LTD.

24 Tasman St, Opunake
Phone 06 761 8105
Fax 06 761 7173

70A Victoria St, Kaponga
Phone 06 764 6899
Fax 06 764 6234

More information at
www.coastalvets.co.nz

VETERINARIANS

Jean-Pierre Le Prou *BVSc*
Kyle Crowley *BVSc*
Matt Thomas *BVSc*
Callum Taylor *BVSc*
Franzi Crowley *DVM*
Georgia Johansson-Latham
BVSc
Sophie Mote *BVSc*

SUPPORT STAFF

Sandra Hammersley
Steph Bramald
Nathan Potter
Jenna Phillips
Dianne Severson

CLINIC OPENING HOURS

Opunake
Mon-Fri: 8am—5pm
Saturday: 9am—12pm

Kaponga
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 4.30pm
After hours for emergencies

IN THIS ISSUE
FLUTD

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD)

What is it?

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is an umbrella term for a disease syndrome affecting the lower urinary tract of cats, i.e. the bladder and urethra. Inflammation of these two structures is the cause of any clinical signs seen and there are a range of problems that could give rise to this inflammation.

Are all kinds of cats affected?

Any cat could be affected, although individuals could be more at risk if they:

- Are overweight
- Spend most of their time inside or in multi cat households
- Are young to middle aged. As cats get older the risk decreases.
- Are “stressy” or highly strung
- Are male – males are more likely to get a blockage

What are the signs?

- Blood in the urine
- Straining to urinate (could be confused for straining to poo)
- Increased attempts to urinate but with only small amounts of urine
- Urinating in unusual places
- Licking around the urinary opening
- Urinary blockage – usually males – an EMERGENCY (see below)

Why do they get it?

There are a range of possible causes for FLUTD. Differentiating between these causes is important as it can change the way each cat is treated. Some of the causes are:

- Urinary crystals
- Bladder stones/calculi
- Urethral plugs/blockages
- Urinary tract infection
- Cancer/neoplasia
- Idiopathic – many cats fall into this category where no apparent cause of the inflammation can be found

How is it diagnosed?

The above clinical signs are an initial indication that urinary tract inflammation is occurring. Follow up tests on a urine sample can confirm the presence of inflammation and/or blood. Further tests may include: culture for bacteria; x-ray for bladder stones; blood samples to look for other disease.



How is it treated?

If it is the first time a cat has developed these signs then simply treating the symptoms can be enough to get the cat through the episode. If signs persist or recur and no further testing has been done to narrow down the cause then testing would be recommended at this point. Examples of possible treatments include:

- Anti-inflammatories and pain relief drugs
- Fluids given under the skin to help stretch and 'flush' the bladder
- Antibiotics - if infection confirmed
- Unblocking the urethra of blocked cats – especially male cats – an EMERGENCY
- Surgical removal of bladder stones
- Diet change to one that dissolves and prevents crystals

Remember there is no "one size fits all" treatment for FLUTD cats and despite suitable treatment signs may still recur in individual animals.

What can I do to try to prevent it?

Over the years a number of things have been suggested to try to prevent the disease in cats, with many having fallen out of favour. Note that the majority of cats in their lifetime will not appear to get the disease suggesting certain qualities or environments of individual animals make them more susceptible. You may be able to help by:

- ✓ Increasing water intake – have multiple sources of water available and/or a drinking fountain (some cats like these). Using wet food (~70-80% water) in the diet of cats that do not drink a lot.
- ✓ Using diets that help prevent crystal formation (if urine crystals are involved).
- ✓ Reduce stress/enrich environment – keep food consistent, have multiple water sources, have more than one litter tray and clean regularly, provide plenty of space and places to hide, have toys/scratch posts/cat towers available.



EMERGENCIES – Blocked Bladders in Cats

What is it?

Because of their narrower urethra, a complication of FLUTD in male cats is blockage of urine flow out of the bladder. Urine contains a lot of waste products from the body; as it is retained in the bladder these waste products are reabsorbed into the blood stream and will build up to toxic levels.

What are the signs?

Signs can be similar to other FLUTD cats (see above). But as they are blocked they can also:

- Be painful in the belly and howl out loudly
- Strain to urinate but produce no urine
- Become very sick and appear "flat" or "weak"

What do I do if this happens?

Blocked bladders are an EMERGENCY. Build-up of toxins in the blood stream (especially potassium) can slow and eventually stop the heart. The kidneys can also be damaged and possibly lead to their failure. The likelihood of a good outcome increases if the cat is seen early!

How is it treated?

The urethra has to be unblocked to remove urine from the body. Cats are normally kept in the clinic while a urinary catheter is placed, abnormalities in electrolytes and toxins corrected and testing carried out to try and identify a possible cause. It is important to note that blockages can be frustrating to treat. Cats could re-block at any time although a good number of them never appear to have an issue again.

In Brief

*Even though the months are colder and your pets may not appear to be bothered by fleas **keep up to date with flea treatments.** These not only control fleas on pets but also other life cycle stages in the environment. When the weather does eventually warm up you don't want an explosion in the flea population!!!*

*With cows calving comes a potential smorgasbord of cleanings, dead calves, milk and calf poo for dogs. **Please do not allow your dog to eat these.** Weight gain in our canine companions is one issue. Access to calf sheds could allow grubby dogs to pass on infection (e.g. Crypto) to people and especially children when they come in contact with them. Eating cleanings or dead calves (raw meat) completes the lifecycle of the parasite Neospora which can lead to abortion/empties in cows when they eat pasture or drink water contaminated with infected dog faeces.*
