

Bladder Stones in Cats

Overview

Stones of the urinary tract begin as microscopic [crystals](#) that aggregate to form stones of variable size and shape anywhere within the urinary system, including the kidneys, ureters, and urethra, although stones of the urinary bladder are most common.

Risk

There are several factors that can contribute to stones of the bladder and urinary tract. They include changes in diet or water intake, underlying metabolic disease, congenital problems, and [bacterial infections](#) of the urinary tract. Cats that get uroliths (stones) once are at risk for a recurrence.

Not all cats with bladder stones show signs of having this problem. In fact, in some cases the discovery of bladder stones happens only when your cat is in for his annual physical exam.

If your feline friend is suffering from bladder stones, he may exhibit the following signs:

- Straining or signs of pain while urinating
- Staying in the urinating position for a long time
- Urinating only small amounts
- Urinating more frequently
- Blood in the urine
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Accidents outside of the litter pan

Diagnosis/Treatment

If your pet shows any of these signs, you should contact your veterinarian right away. Your veterinarian will review your cat's history and conduct a physical exam, including palpating your cat's urethra and urinary bladder. If you see any stones present after your cat urinates, call your veterinarian regarding the proper way to collect and store them; they may be helpful in determining the best way to treat your four-legged friend.

Your veterinarian might also recommend the following tests:

- A urinalysis and urine culture to rule out urinary tract infections and to evaluate the kidney's ability to concentrate urine

- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver, and pancreatic function, as well as sugar levels
- A complete blood count (CBC) to rule out blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests to ensure your pet isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- A thyroid test to determine if the thyroid gland is producing too much thyroid hormone
- X-rays of the urinary tract to identify if stones or other abnormalities are present
- Abdominal ultrasound to evaluate the urinary tract and identify if stones or other abnormalities are present
- A stone analysis of any passed bladder stones to determine the chemical makeup of the stone

If your cat has been diagnosed with bladder or other urinary tract stones, the ultimate goal will be to dissolve the stones or remove them and, most important of all, prevent them from recurring. Your veterinarian will determine the right approach for your pet.

Some options that may be suggested are:

- Fluid Therapy to help flush the kidneys and urinary tract, which can facilitate the passing of small stones and crystals
- Medication to treat the underlying cause, such as an antibiotic, if there is evidence of a bacterial infection
- Pain medication, if needed
- Surgery to remove the stones
- Prescription diets to help dissolve some types of bladder stones and prevent them from recurring

Prevention

While you may not be able to prevent your pet from getting bladder stones the first time, you can help prevent their recurrence with the right diet and care. It is very important to follow all instructions provided by your veterinarian, including giving all medications and coming in for follow-up visits and tests.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.

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