

Bladder Stones in Dogs

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. There are several types of bladder stones. Some reach up to four inches in diameter, filling up 80% of a dog's bladder space! Dogs can have single or multiple bladder stones.

Risk

There is no real understanding as to why some dogs get stones of the urinary tract while others don't.

Some breeds that are more susceptible to the development of stones include: genetics, abnormal urine pH, type of diet, and [urinary tract infections](#). Urinary stones may result from one or a combination of these causes.

- [Basset Hound](#)
- [Beagle](#)
- [Bulldog](#)
- [Cocker spaniel](#)
- [Dachshund](#)
- [Dalmatian](#)
- [Miniature schnauzer](#)
- [Pekingese](#)
- [Pug](#)
- [Welsh Corgi](#)

Not all dogs with stones show signs of a problem. In fact, in some cases the discovery of bladder and other urinary tract stones happens when Fido is in for his annual physical exam.

If your pooch 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 more frequently, but with little output
- [Blood in the urine](#)
- [Vomiting](#)
- [Loss of appetite](#)

Diagnosis/Treatment

If your best friend shows any of these signs, you should contact your veterinarian right away. Your veterinarian will review your dog's history and conduct a physical exam that includes palpating your dog's urethra and urinary bladder. If you see any stones present after your dog urinates, call your veterinarian regarding the proper way to collect and store them; they may be helpful in determining the bestway 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 ability of the kidneys 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 little thyroid hormone
- X-rays of the urinary tract to identify if stones, crystals, or other abnormalities such as tumors are present
- Abdominal ultrasound to evaluate the urinary tract and identify if stones, crystals or other abnormalities such as tumors are present
- A stone analysis of any stones passed in the urine or surgically removed to determine the type (chemical makeup)of the stone

If your dog has been diagnosed with bladder stones, the ultimate goal will be to dissolve the stones or remove them and, most important, to prevent them from recurring. Your veterinarian will determine the right approach for your pooch.

Some treatment recommendations may include:

- Fluid Therapy to help flush the kidneys and urinary tract, which could facilitate the passing of small stones and crystals
- Medication to treat the underlying cause, such as an antibiotic if there is evidence of a urinary tract infection

Bladder Stones in Dogs

- 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.