

# Urinary problems



## What are signs of urinary problems in cats or dogs?

Animals urinate in inappropriate places (on sofas, beds, in the bathtub, cats often urinate outside the litter box, ...).

- Urination seems painful
- Abnormal meowing/vocalisation during urination (signs of discomfort or pain).
- Hematuria (bloody urine)
- Dysuria (straining to urinate, just a few drops come out or nothing at all).
- Pollakiuria (frequent urination in small quantities)
- Excessive licking of genital areas or of the lower abdomen
- Tendency to hide, vomit, lethargy or is calmer than usual
- Sometimes, the animal cannot urinate at all

## What are the most common causes of urinary problems?

- Bladder stones or crystals
- Urinary tract infection or inflammation
- Idiopathic (in the cat) : this means that despite all tests performed, no cause could be identified

## What tests are necessary to find and adequately treat a urinary problem?

1. A urinalysis : will show if the problem is related to crystals, a urinary tract infection or inflammation
2. Imaging (x-rays or ultrasound). These are important to check for the presence of stones or tumors in the bladder or the rest of the urinary tract.
3. A urine culture: to confirm the presence of a bacterial infection and identify the bacteria involved; then to know which antibiotic would be best to use.
4. Bloodwork : to check the kidney function. Performed as needed only.

## Is it an emergency?

Some urinary problems, like a urinary tract obstruction by stones or mucus/crystal plugs, are very serious, even fatal conditions since the pet cannot urinate at all. A urinary tract infection can also "go up" the urinary tract and infect the kidneys causing a pyelonephritis. This is a very painful condition and needs to be treated as soon as possible. Remember



Dr. Helene Dufour, DMV, IPSAV  
Clinician in the emergency



that, as a rule of thumb, the faster the condition is diagnosed and treated, the fewer chances that the condition will worsen and the less your pet will suffer.

### Depending on the diagnosis, what treatments will be recommended?

- 🐾 A specific diet that maintains the urine pH between 6 and 6.5
- 🐾 Medications (antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, pain medications, etc)
- 🐾 Surgery may be needed (to remove stones or a tumor in the bladder)
- 🐾 Encourage your pet to drink
- 🐾 Decrease stress

### How can you encourage your pet to drink more?

1. Giving him canned food is a good way to encourage him to drink, because of the higher water content of this diet. The taste of this diet is also usually very appreciated among dogs and cats. The food can be warmed up for a few seconds in the microwave (5 sec max) to increase its palatability. Offer food at least 2 or 3 times a day. You can also add water to the canned food (very gradually). You can add water to dried food but, unfortunately, this mash is not always appreciated by our furry friends.
2. Make sure your pet has access to fresh water at all times. Cats are very sensitive to the temperature and taste of water. Some cats like fresh water and will scorn water at room temperature. Keep water refrigerated and try different kinds of water (Brita, distilled, bottled, etc) and see which kind your pet prefers! Some animals like ice cubes in their water bowl. You can also add a few drops of tuna juice (from tuna in water cans) in his water bowl! If you try this trick, do not forget to change the water often, and to always leave another bowl of water with nothing added in it.
3. Always keep the water bowl full. Cats have very sensitive whiskers and do not like for them to touch the sides of the bowl.
4. Keep water and food bowls away from busy areas or the litter box.
5. Clean the bowls often, at least every 2 days.

### How can you decrease your pet's stress level?

- 🐾 Try to identify stressful events in your pet's life (change of season, recent moving, bought a new pet, new family member, change of diet, schedule change, new litter substrate, boarding, etc) and try to decrease or minimise these changes as much as possible.
- 🐾 Keep at least 1 litterbox per cat
- 🐾 Place the litterbox in a calm area of the house (avoid busy and loud areas like the laundry room, etc).
- 🐾 Do not put the litterbox's lid on
- 🐾 Use a litter substrate without odour. Many types of substrate exist, you can try and find the one your cat prefers.
- 🐾 Clean out the litter box often (ideally daily) and change it on a regular basis (ideally weekly)
- 🐾 Make any changes in your cat's routine very gradually (ex. in his diet).