

# FELINE CYSTITIS

*(Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease)*

Cystitis (inflammation of the bladder), is a relatively common disease entity in cats, and as owners it is important to recognize the signs and seek veterinary advice early, as left untreated it can rapidly become an emergency.

Typical signs will include urinating in inappropriate places or frequent visits to the litter tray, and straining to urinate with variable success. Urine is often noticeably bloody. This is a painful condition and your cat may vocalize and appear in significant discomfort. You may perceive your cat to be “constipated”.

There are a number of different causes of cystitis; in younger cats (<10 years) as many as 55-69% will be induced purely by stress; a complex interaction between substances released from feline nerves under conditions of stress and their damaging, painful effect on the bladder lining. Other causes include bladder crystals and stones, protein substances forming “plugs” stopping the normal flow of urine, and less commonly infections, anatomical deformities and growths.

Many underlying conditions can predispose stress-induced cystitis.

- Obesity
- Reduced exercise
- Those using an indoor litter box
- Those with restricted outside access
- Those on a dry diet
- Multi-cat households, particularly if the cats have negative interaction



There are three key things you can do to reduce the risk of cystitis in your cat:

## 1. AVOID OBESITY

- Modern diets are too palatable to be fed “ad-lib”

- Neutered cats need significantly less calories than entire cats – either gradually reduce intake or switch to a neutered diet post neutering
- Do NOT crash diet your cat – it can have potentially life threatening consequences – visit our nurses for a free weight clinic and advice
- Invent food games – hide kibble in old tissue boxes/paper bags
- Play with your cat

## 2. REDUCE STRESS

- Secure cat flaps (Pet Porte®) avoid unwanted visitors
- Restrict visual access into and out of house by screens/plants
- Cats are solitary creatures and in multi-cat households should each have each of the five key resources in different locations around the house (water, food, toilet, bed, safe place) as well as entry and exit points
- Privacy – hide feeding/toileting stations
- Anti-stress products such as Feliway™ – a fraction of the feline facial pheromone; available as both a plug-in diffuser (preferable) and spray



## 3. INCREASE WATER INTAKE

- Feed a wet diet
- Water fountains
- Ceramic bowls, filled to brim (cats don't like getting their whiskers wet!)
- You should provide one more water bowl (and one more litter box) than the number of cats in your household

In “at-risk” cats, beware of the development of altered behaviours such as increased grooming around the bottom and increased inter-cat aggression as both of these may precede the development of a bout of cystitis. If you would like any more information on feline cystitis, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE ADVICE IS BASED ON PREVENTION AND CREATING A SUITABLE HOME ENVIRONMENT ONLY; IF YOUR CAT IS SUFFERING FROM CYSTITIS IT NEEDS TO SEE A VET IMMEDIATELY.**

