

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Urinary tract infections are more common in female than male pets and are much more common in dogs than cats. They are mostly caused by bacteria, specifically bacteria that are usually located in the gastrointestinal tract and on the skin. For infections to occur, there needs to be a break in the pets normal immune defences and the bacteria must be able to migrate into the urinary tract and multiply. Some of these bacteria are very crafty and have special attachments on their surface that allow them to move up the urinary tract despite urination. In most cases just the urethra and bladder are effected but sometimes, the bacteria can ascend into the kidneys causing irreparable damage and this is much more serious.

WHAT SIGNS WILL WE SEE?

The bacteria cause inflammation and damage to the walls of the bladder and urethra and this is what causes clinical signs, These include:

- blood in urine
- increased urgency to urinate
- straining to urinate
- inability to hold onto urine (incontinence)
- urinating small volumes regularly
- urinating in inappropriate places

Sometimes urinary tract infections become more complicated when the kidneys are affected, if there are crystals in the urine or stones in the bladder. These are more serious cases and are associated with the clinical signs such as:

- lethargy
- inappetance
- abdominal pain
- abnormal behaviour

DIAGNOSIS:

When you bring your pet into the clinic we will ask you to bring a urine sample with you. We understand that this can be difficult but it is very important that we examine this so we can see what changes there are in the urine. We will assess the concentration of the urine, the pH (acidity) as well as check what cells and other chemicals may be in the urine. We can then spin the urine and look at the cells and debris under the microscope. This

shows us if there are bacteria, inflammatory cells or crystals present. This study is called urinalysis and sediment exam. We will then use the results from these tests together with the information you gave us and the clinical signs we detected by examining your pet to develop a treatment plan. We may need to do further tests such as x-rays (looking for stones) or ultrasounds (examining the bladder wall for masses and cancers), or even blood tests if we are worried about other organs within the body.

If your pet's urinary tract infection is one that keeps coming back we may also culture it. To do this we place a needle into the bladder and remove urine in a sterile manner to send to an outside laboratory. They then tell us exactly what bacteria is causing the infection and what antibiotics work best to cure the infection.

TREATMENTS:

The cornerstones of treatment for urinary tract infections are anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. Urinary tract infections are very painful so by reducing the inflammation, with anti-inflammatories, we not only assist with the healing process but also reduce the pain your pet is feeling. A long course of antibiotics is required to clear up the infection that caused the problem. Other medications may be required depending on secondary problems. Changes in diet may also be advised if the condition is chronic (on going) since some urinary tract infections can be controlled by changing the pH of the urine, and prescription diets can have this result. If bladder stones are present, surgery may be required to remove these however, this will be avoided if possible, medical management is better long term for these dogs if it is appropriate.

Regular check ups or retesting of urine is likely to be required so please follow directions regarding these requests as they are in the best interest of your pet and are aimed at gaining long term control of the condition as many of these are recurring complaints. If you have any further questions regarding this, please contact the clinic on **53811996**.