

# Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What is FLUTD?

FLUTD stands for Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease and is a term used to describe any group of disorders or diseases that affects the lower urinary tract (bladder or urethra) in cats. The most common disorder of the group is feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC). FIC involves inflammation by an unknown cause, but stress is thought to be a significant factor. FLUTD is also associated with the formation of crystals/stones in the urinary tract that can cause numerous and painful ailments for your cat. The two most common types of crystals/stones are struvite and calcium oxalate.

### Q. What are some warning signs of FLUTD?

- Urinating outside the litter box
- Increased frequency of urination, usually passing small amounts of urine
- Pink, dark or bloody urine
- Straining to urinate
- Licking the genital area
- Crying out in pain/vocalizing during attempts to urinate

### Q. Why is it important to understand FLUTD?

Outside of routine care, FLUTD is the number one reason pet owners take their cats to the veterinarian (Why Fluffy went to the doctor. *Vet Econ*, 2005). Urinating \ outside the litter box is the number one behavioral reason why cats are given up to shelters. If not properly treated, inappropriate urination can affect the cleanliness/safety of the home and the bond between family and pet.

### Q. What can I do if my cat is showing signs of FLUTD?

If your cat exhibits any of the warning signs of FLUTD, consult your veterinarian immediately and find out if a Hill's® Prescription Diet® therapeutic pet food is right for your cat.

### Q. What are some risk factors associated with FLUTD?

FLUTD is a multifactor disease. Though there is no single cause of lower urinary tract disease, veterinarians recognize there are components that may contribute to the prevalence of the disease. For more detailed information, contact your veterinarian.

- Patient factors:
  - Age of 1 year or older
  - Overweight
  - Lack of exercise
  - History of chronic kidney disease or urinary tract procedures
  - Gender: Although the risk of obstruction from crystals or stones is greater for neutered males, both genders are at risk for FLUTD
- Environmental factors
  - Inside-only cat
  - Multiple pet households
  - Stress
    - ° Potential causes of stress include house guests, conflict with other pets, or a lack of places to rest or hide
- Nutritional factors
  - Inadequate water intake
  - High intake of minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and magnesium
    - ° Often found in grocery store brand pet food

# Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) Frequently Asked Questions (Cont'd)

## **Q. How is FLUTD treated?**

Feeding your pet a food that's developed specially for their urinary health, like a **Hill's® Prescription Diet® therapeutic pet food**, can have a significant impact on managing cats with FLUTD. Additional ways to manage FLUTD include the following:

- Increasing water consumption
  - Make sure water is clean, fresh and available at all times
  - Feeding moist food also helps increase water consumption
- Feed several small meals during the day instead of one or two larger meals
- Decrease stress in the environment
  - Schedule time during the day to play with your cat.
  - Ensure that there are enough litter boxes available. A good rule of thumb is one more litter box than the number of cats in the household.
- Monitor the changes in the home and any conflicts with other pets in the house
  - Cats are very sensitive to their environments and reducing potential causes of stress, especially for a cat with FLUTD, can go a long way to improving your pet's life

## **Q. What are the chances of FLUTD coming back?**

FLUTD is potentially a lifelong disease. There are therapeutic foods that are safe to feed every day, long-term, for multi-cat households. Be sure to check with your veterinarian for more information. Many owners see improvements in their cat's health and discontinue use of therapeutic foods. Even with the best treatment, some cats may have recurring signs or periodic episodes of FLUTD.

**It is important to continue with your veterinarian's food recommendation and watch the pet closely for the recurrence of signs.**