



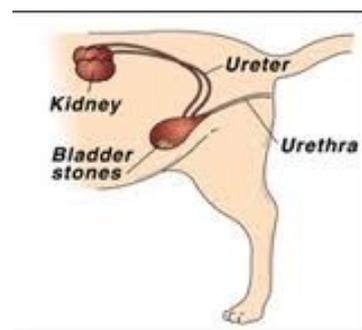
Bladder Stones in Cats and Dogs

We have had a few cases of bladder stones in small breed dogs lately...

How do I know if my pet has bladder stones?

Some of the common clinical signs of bladder stones are:

- Straining to pass urine
- Bloody urine
- Frequent urination or urination outside the litter box
- Licking around the groin region
- Some animals are very unwell when obstructed (listless, off food, irritable, yowling-cats)



How can my pet with bladder stones be helped?

If your pet is obstructed and is very sick, your vet will give treatment to stabilise the pet and will perform a temporary relief of the obstructed bladder. Once the pet is stabilised a treatment plan (starting with unblocking the urethra) will be made. To help establish a diagnosis it is essential for x-rays to be taken and for the urine to be analysed. Some stones are not visible on x-ray. Ultrasound diagnosis can detect bladder stones but is less valuable in predicting the stone type.

Different stones require different treatment and prevention plans

The most accurate way of assessing the stone type is for your vet to have the stone sent to a special laboratory. The stone is analysed and the mineral composition of each part of the stone can be found. This will help your vet decide on the best plan for prevention. Your vet can do this if the stone has been surgically removed or if a small stone has been voided through the urethra.

Dissolving stones

Some stones can be eliminated by using special diets and supportive drug therapy to dissolve them. This is ideal as it prevents the need for surgery. It is vital that you do not feed your pet anything apart from the special diet. This is not easy! Though pets are fortunate in that these diets are available where as this is not an option for people.

Surgery

Some stones cannot be dissolved or they are so large that the vet decides that surgery is best for your pet. These include stones that are formed due to metabolic abnormalities such as urate stones in Dalmatian dogs.

Preventing stones from reforming

Many bladder stones will reform even after removal. This is because your pet has a propensity to form the stones. On going monitoring will help your vet find small stones that might be able to removed by minimally invasive techniques (i.e. surgery might be avoided). Special diets are often needed to help prevent recurrences. These diets are formulated to have minimal amounts of the minerals that make up the specific stone. They result in urine having the appropriate acidity to help prevent the stone reforming and have specific components such as special protein make up and stone inhibitors to help prevent stone formation. Different diets are needed for different stones. Feeding the canned forms of these diets will help your pet produce dilute urine which also assists in bladder stone prevention.

Conclusion

It can be difficult to get your pet to eat a specific diet and stick to this, especially fussy cats. However, this can help prevent the need for repeated surgery and the possibility of repeat urine obstruction.

TOP TIPS FOR MOVING HOUSE WITH YOUR CAT

Lots of cats go missing each year due to house shifting activities. Cats bond to places so it is really important to make sure they settle into their new environment when shifting houses. Here are some tips to prevent your cat going missing when you shift:

- Collar and name tag – lets everyone know who your cat belongs to
- Microchipping – this is a permanent form of ID which cannot be lost like a collar and tag
- Keep your cat in one room of the new house initially with food, basket, litter tray and toys until the rest of the house is sorted out
- Introduce your cat to the rest of the house room by room
- Keep your cat inside for the first 1-2 weeks
- When you decide it is time to let kitty outside for the first time do this prior to meal time so you can call it back
- It is a good idea to keep your cat inside at night time as this is when most fights and car accidents happen

Feliway is a great product to make your cat feel relaxed in a new environment



CASE OF THE MONTH—YODA

Yoda is an 8 year old loveable male Keeshond. He first presented for being vaguely unwell and picky with his food late last year. After finding nothing significant on clinical exam Yoda was discharged with instructions for monitoring of his water intake. A few months later Yoda became unwell again but this time was sore and unsteady in his hind limbs and was not eating or drinking much. At this stage we decided to do blood tests and x-rays of his lumbar spine and hind limbs.



The x rays showed arthritis in one of Yoda's hip joints but this did not really explain the extent of his condition. The blood test showed that Yoda had very high levels of calcium in his blood stream. The next step was to find out how the high calcium levels and hind limb lameness related to one another. Possible explanations included a cancer growing in the spine (some cancers elevate blood calcium) or hyperactivity of the parathyroid glands (a pair of tiny glands in the neck which control calcium balance) and subsequent weakness. It was also a possibility that the high calcium level and the lameness could be unrelated.

Specialist diagnostics were needed to solve Yoda's case. His owners were happy to take him up to Christchurch where MRI and expert ultrasound was available at a specialist veterinary clinic. At this clinic they were able to ultrasound Yoda's parathyroid glands and discovered that he had a tumour on one of the glands which was making it secrete too much calcium.

The next step for Yoda was surgery. The affected parathyroid gland was removed and sent away to be tested. This confirmed Yoda had a 'parathyroid adenoma' (a benign cancerous growth on the parathyroid gland). Parathyroid adenomas are extremely rare however Keeshonds are predisposed to getting them.

Because the parathyroid gland with the tumour on it was secreting so much calcium, it meant the other parathyroid gland did not have to do much work so it became small and lazy. Once the overactive gland was removed there was only the small and lazy gland left to do all the work in keeping Yoda's calcium at the right level. Yoda required calcium supplementation to keep his system in tune while the lazy gland started to get back in to action. Yoda hasn't quite followed the book and has had a few ups and downs since surgery. Though he is now on the road to recovery and should have a normal lifespan.



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