

## **FELINE LOWER URINARY TRACT DISEASE (FLUTD)**

I have spoken on this subject before and because it is such a common problem, it bears repeating.

Hand on heart; I have historically had one or more cats in my hospital for the diagnosis and treatment of FLUTD on average, 4 out of 6 days of the week. The incidence of this remains static.

FLUTD involves the urinary bladder and urethra, and regardless of the cause, results in pain during urination. Most cats show this pain by urinating in places other than the litter box or by frequent visits to the box, straining and vocalizing when urinating. Causes of FLUTD include, to mention a few, bacterial infection, viral infection, non-infectious inflammation, tumors and crystals in the urine.

My discussion is going to focus on the latter. Crystals resemble microscopic bits of sand that form in the urine. Excessive crystal excretion causes irritation of the bladder and urethra and can lead to obstruction of urine flow. Obstruction occurs mainly in male cats and this can prove fatal if not corrected. This is due to the small diameter of their urethra. Many cats die every year because of this; -either detected too late or euthanized because of the huge cost required to remedy the problem.

The most common source of crystalluria is diet. My personal opinion is that there are far too many diets available in the pet stores that result in, or can contribute to, FLUTD. Unfortunately the best quality diets are generally the most expensive. Veterinarians have had at least one year in their curriculum studying nutrition, and all Veterinarians have access to current studies concerning pet dietary matters, so please be assured that if you consult your Veterinarian you will be receiving informed and up to date information.

The reason I have been prompted to write this article today, is that in the past month I have had to put three cats to sleep because of this problem.

If you have any questions concerning your pets' diet, please contact your veterinarian, who will only be too happy to help you.