



Feline cystitis

What causes cystitis?

Cystitis is inflammation of the bladder. There are several possible causes of cystitis in cats, so some investigation of the condition is usually necessary. Initial investigation involves urine analysis, but further tests, including blood tests, X-rays, and scans, may also be suggested, particularly in older or very young cats, in cases that fail to respond to treatment, or in cases that recur.

The most common cause of cystitis in cats is “idiopathic cystitis”, in which no specific causes can be identified.



Signs of cystitis

- Straining to pass urine
- Frequent urination
- Discomfort or crying on urination
- Blood in the urine
- Urinating in unusual places

How serious is it?

Cystitis is distressing for cats and their owners. In male cats, there is also a risk of bladder blockage, which is potentially life threatening, and so male cats with symptoms of cystitis should always be seen urgently.

Fortunately, most cats “grow out of cystitis”, with bouts getting less severe and less frequent as they get older.

!!! Due to the risk of obstruction, cystitis in male cats should be treated as an emergency !!!



How is cystitis treated?

- **Pain killers** can be used to make your cat more comfortable during individual bouts of cystitis
- **Increasing activity levels** by playing with your cat, and providing environmental enrichment has been shown to reduce the incidence of cystitis in affected cats
- **Increasing fluid intake** by feeding wet food, providing several water bowls throughout the house, and even offering flavoured water, will produce more dilute urine, which will reduce the bladder irritation.
- **Reduce competition** between cats by providing multiple litter trays, feeding and drinking stations
- **Reduce stress** by providing providing hiding places both inside and outside the house, as stress is thought to play a part in the condition
- **Special diets** may help by changing the composition of the urine
- **Long term medication** may also be used in some cases to reduce the frequency and severity of episodes
- **Pheromones** can be used to make cats feel more relaxed



Regular check-ups are important with all animals on continuous treatment to monitor for progression of disease, and to look for concurrent problems that may affect the choice of treatment