



What is Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD)? FLUTD is a term used to describe different diseases that cause inflammation or irritation to the bladder. These conditions can range from mild to severe. Sometimes a cause is relatively easy to identify, such as infection. But we often see this condition when there is no true underlying cause, and then we call it **Feline Idiopathic Cystitis (FIC)**. This is seen most commonly in young to middle aged cats. These cats tend to be overweight, eat a dry diet, have little exercise, or are indoor only. Stress increases a cat's risk of getting this disease, which can include developing a dislike of their litter box.

What signs will I see in my cat? The signs we see in cats are because their bladder is inflamed and painful:

- Trying to pee
- Peeing small amounts
- Many trips to the litter box
- Crying when peeing
- Licking near penis or vulva
- Peeing blood
- Peeing outside the litter box

Is this an emergency? YES-in boy cats that are showing these signs without peeing much or at all. Boy cats can have a blockage in which cells plug the tube from the bladder. This is a serious condition that can lead to death and your cat should go to a veterinary hospital immediately.

How do you diagnose this condition? When your cat comes to the hospital we will do a physical exam and look at a pee sample and sometimes take x-rays.

How do I help my cat? Treatment in the hospital includes fluids and pain medications and, if necessary, using a catheter to unblock the bladder tube. In addition to medications we try to figure out possible causes of these flare ups and ways to prevent them in the future.

- Increase water intake: Cats with this condition would ideally eat canned food to keep them well hydrated. Cats may drink more water if there is a water fountain system at home.
- Reduce stress: It is important to be aware of changes in the house or routine that may be stressful to your cat. Be sure to provide your cats with elevated surfaces, like a cat tree, to allow for an escape and hiding place. Feliway, a feline pheromone, has a soothing effect and can be used in a diffuser (like a glade plug in) or a spray. Some pets may benefit from anti-anxiety medications. See our handout on Inappropriate Elimination for more information.
- Reduce crystals: Crystals form from minerals in the urine that develop when the urine isn't properly balanced. These crystals may irritate the bladder. There are prescription diets available in different flavors and textures to help prevent build up of these crystals.