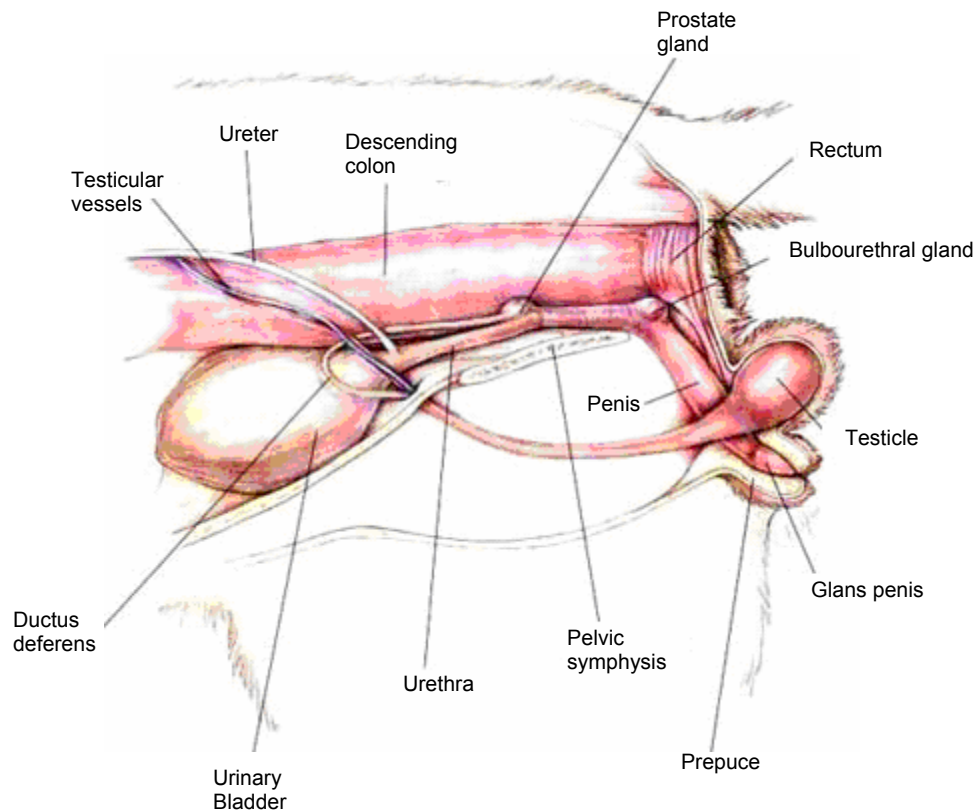




Reducing the Risks of Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease



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The lower urinary tract includes the bladder and urethra, the tube that connects the bladder to the outside. The most common disorders of the urinary tract include bladder infections and stones and feline urologic syndrome. This client education sheet will help you learn more about the risks of lower urinary tract disease and will review your veterinarian's plan for keeping your pet healthy, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

Risk Factor Management for Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease

A risk factor is a condition or characteristic that predisposes an animal to disease. For example, high blood pressure in human beings increases the risk of stroke and heart and kidney failure. The importance of identifying risk factors is that sometimes the risk factor (high blood pressure, for example) can be eliminated or controlled to prevent or lessen the severity of the disease (stroke, for example). Veterinarians also recognize risk factors in pets. The extent to which such risk factors are managed will help determine the length and quality of your pet's life.

Risk Factors

Risk factors for lower urinary tract disease in cats include the following:

- Foods that contain excess magnesium.
- Bacterial bladder infections.
- Urine crystals. Crystals are the building blocks for bladder stones. In cats, struvite crystals formed from magnesium, ammonium, and phosphate are most common.
- Alkaline urine pH.
- Reduced water intake due to unavailable or poor-quality water.
- Infrequent urination caused by dirty litter pans.
- Sex. Male cats frequently can't urinate because crystals obstruct their urethras.
- Obesity
- Reduced physical activity

Although prior lower urinary tract disease is not necessarily a risk factor, it does indicate a high probability that your cat will develop lower urinary tract disease again.

Detecting Risk Factors

Frequent and complete veterinary checkups including urinalyses are especially important as your pet ages. Your veterinarian will be able to prepare a list of risk factors for your cat based on the history you provide, results of the physical examination and diagnostic studies, and his or her knowledge of disorders that commonly affect cats of similar age, breed, and sex. Your veterinarian may instruct you to measure the pH of your pet's urine to help determine if the risk factors of altered urine pH and bladder infections are present. He or she will teach you how to perform this test.

Managing Risk Factors

Based on your pet's risk factor profile, your veterinarian may recommend one or more of the following:

- Daily activity sessions for your cat.
- Medications. Antibiotics and other medications may be necessary to prevent some types of bladder stones.
- Continuous access to fresh water supply.
- Means to promote frequent urination such as clean litter boxes.
- Routine examinations and diagnostic studies. These are the best ways to detect early changes that can be managed to protect your cat's health.

Nutrition Plan

Your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change to reduce the nutritional risks that contribute to lower urinary tract disease. Optimal nutrition provides the right amount of nutrients for tissue maintenance and repair. More important, optimal nutrition should reduce the building blocks for bladder crystals and stones, and contribute to the formation of urine with a pH appropriate for crystal dissolution. Foods that avoid excess levels of magnesium and promote acidic urine formation include Hill's® Science Diet® brand of dietary cat foods.

Depending on your cat's urine characteristics and risk profile, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Some special foods further avoid magnesium excesses and contribute to formation of urine with a pH appropriate for higher risk patients. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Feline c/d®.

For more information about lower urinary tract disorders ask your veterinarian for copies of the *Hill's Client Information Series* handouts titled "*Feline Urologic Syndrome*" and "*Bladder Stones*."

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, or hand feeding for the first few days. Do not add water to your cat's food though. Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.