

Urethral Obstruction in Cats

Urethral obstruction in cats, also referred to as blocked toms, is a problem seen primarily in male cats. If a cat has a urinary obstruction it means that they are having difficulty urinating or, more commonly they cannot urinate at all. This is caused when the urethra (the tube leading out of the bladder through the penis) is either partly or completely blocked. When a cat cannot urinate it becomes a dangerous and life-threatening situation.

Causes of urinary obstruction in cats include:

- ✓ Crystals and/or stones
- ✓ Mucus plugs
- ✓ Diet
- ✓ Excessive weight
- ✓ Decreased water intake
- ✓ Environmental Stress



Signs of Urinary obstruction in cats include:

- ✓ Entering the litter box more frequently
- ✓ Straining to urinate with little to no urine in the litter box
- ✓ Unusual accidents in the house
- ✓ Constantly licking below the base of the tail
- ✓ Vocalization more than normal especially while in the litter box
- ✓ A depressed attitude
- ✓ Weakness
- ✓ Lack of appetite
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Dehydration
- ✓ Hiding

If you notice the above signs please contact your veterinarian immediately. Your veterinarian will have you bring your cat in to see if they have a urethral obstruction. If they do have an obstruction your veterinarian will admit your cat to remove the obstruction. They will want to check bloodwork to evaluate kidney function and the overall health of your cat as well as a urinalysis. To unblock your cat the veterinarian will need to sedate your cat and place a urinary catheter that will remain in place for 24 to 48 hours. Your cat will also receive fluids either under the skin or intravenously to help flush out the bladder. Your cat will remain in the clinic for a minimum of three days. If the veterinarian cannot unblock your cat they would recommend doing a perineal urethrostomy surgery where they shorten and redirect the urethra so that the cat urinates as if it were a female. When they do this the urethra is wider and there is less of a chance of the cat becoming blocked.

Once your cat comes home from the veterinary clinic it is very important to monitor your cat to ensure that they are urinating for at least one month. During this month they are at a high risk of

becoming re-obstructed. Your veterinarian may also recommend a diet change to hopefully reduce the chances of your cat obstructing again and to encourage them to drink more water. There are several different ways to encourage them to drink more water such as having a water fountain, having multiple bowls of fresh water available, or adding things such as low sodium chicken broth, tuna juice, or ice cubes. If your cat is overweight your veterinarian will recommend weight loss to reduce the risk of re-obstruction.



If you have any questions or would like more information about urethral obstructions in cats please call us at (920) 668-6212 or email us at info@cgvet.com.