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## **Feline Idiopathic Cystitis**

**A brief description.** Feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC), feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) and feline urologic syndrome (FUS) are all terms used to describe a syndrome that can affect the bladder. Signs you may see at home that may be suggestive of this syndrome are frequently urinating small amounts of urine, blood-tinged urine, straining to urinate and/or urinating outside the litter box. This is a problem that we primarily see in cats < 10 years of age. Environmental stress seems to play the biggest part in causing the problem. The increased level of stress hormones causes inflammation within the bladder wall, which leads to irritation and potentially obstruction (most commonly in male cats). Other causes include bladder stones (20% of cats), less likely a bacterial infection (3% of cats) and other causes as well. To help diagnose this problem your veterinarian may recommend blood work, urinalysis, urine culture and abdominal radiographs.

### **Therapy for your cat.**

- **Making a cat friendly home.**
  - Environmental enrichment. This is proving to be one of the most important aspects in managing this syndrome. Provide scratching posts so that you may engage your cat's normal behavior. Offering several different types of toys and other modes of stimulation will help keep them stress free as well. Some toy ideas include food puzzles, laser pointers and wands. Providing perches throughout the house may give them a sense of security.
  - Stressors for cats can be varied from cat to cat. It is often times difficult to pinpoint the cause, but potential causes include renovations to the house, inter-cat aggression, moving, changes in litter, etc. If you can identify the source, then changes should be made to fix the situation.
  - Litter box maintenance. A general rule of thumb is to have one litter box per cat plus one with at least one litter box on each floor of multilevel houses. Avoid placing the boxes near noisy areas (by a furnace) or areas of high traffic. Have an open ended litter box that does not have a dead end. We recommend a clumping, non-scented clay litter in a large open box.
- **Increasing water consumption.**
  - This is believed to be one of the mainstays of treatment for FIC. The increased water dilutes the urine to help make the toxins and inflammation less irritating to the bladder wall. The bladder also becomes more distended from the increased amount urine causing less inflammation and pain.

- Canned food is 80% water and therefore a great way for cats to get more water in their diet. The following foods are good choices: Purina DM can, Fancy Feast Chunky Chicken or Chunky Turkey, Wellness chicken or turkey, Nature's Variety Instincts.
- You should always have fresh water available. Some cats prefer moving sources of water, which can be accomplished with the use of a decorative fountain.
- If your cat prefers dry food over canned food, you may add a small amount of tuna juice or clam juice as a flavorful alternative to water.
- Prescription veterinary diets may be recommended by your veterinarian to help increase water consumption and prevent the development of bladder stones as well.
- **Medications.** It is your doctor's discretion whether to use antibiotics, anti-anxiety medications or other medications to help manage this syndrome.
- You may visit [www.indoorcat.org](http://www.indoorcat.org) for further information.

**Summary.** Feline idiopathic cystitis can be a very frustrating disease syndrome to manage. It will take a lot of effort and understanding of your cat to help prevent this from becoming a regular problem. If you should have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call The Patton Veterinary Hospital.

**Kevin Schmidt, DVM**