

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS



Why is My Dog Leaking Urine?

Urinary incontinence in dogs is a frustrating problem. But, that does not mean that it cannot be treated. Having accidents in the house or leaking urine while sleeping may be caused by several different medical conditions. True incontinence differs from other types of inappropriate urination in that the dog is not aware that he or she is leaking urine and the dog has no control over the event. It is an involuntary action. Problems that may mimic incontinence are lack of proper housetraining, cognitive dysfunction in older dogs and submissive urination. So, what causes urinary incontinence? Some pets will have accidents or become temporarily incontinent if they have a bladder infection. Older spayed female dogs may develop a weak bladder sphincter due to aging and loss of estrogen and, as a result, may leak urine while relaxed or sleeping. Increased water drinking as seen in conditions like diabetes mellitus, Cushing's disease, kidney disease or other medical problems may also cause increased urination or leaking urine. Finally, spinal cord injuries due to trauma or intervertebral disk disease may cause loss of bladder function. In rare cases, an anatomic defect such as a ureter that does not enter the bladder in the correct position known as "ectopic ureter" may cause incontinence. Treating the underlying condition if possible will usually cause the urinary incontinence to resolve. However, in some cases, especially for those spayed females who exhibit urine leaking while resting, there are medications that can treat the symptoms. For a few dogs, surgery may be required to correct ectopic ureter or to tighten the bladder sphincter. If medications or surgery do not work or are not an option for your pet, wearing a diaper or using "pee pads" around the house may be a helpful solution.

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