

COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER– October 2021

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease- FLUTD

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease occurs when cats are unable to pass urine and is often referred to as 'blocked cat'. Urethral obstruction is dealt with as an emergency as cats with this condition may die within two to three days if not treated. Cats with non-obstructive disease are able to pass urine and typically strain to pass small amounts on a very frequent basis. Urine may appear abnormal, possibly bloody, and cats may show signs of pain when straining. It can be distressing to watch your cat during these episodes and it is important we see them to diagnose the problem. As well as a physical examination, we discuss your cat's behavior, their history, do urine and blood tests and possibly imaging and biopsies. Of key importance in a cat with FLUTD is establishing whether the urinary bladder is full. A cat with urethral obstruction and a full bladder will need emergency treatment. Many cats with FLUTD will have an empty, possibly painful bladder on palpation and can be treated accordingly. Feline Idiopathic cystitis (FIC) is the most common cause of FLUTD in cats. Chronic and inescapable stresses are thought to be most important contributors. Multi-cat households, stressful events such as moving house, new pets causing tension, upset with neighbouring cats may be exacerbating clinical signs. These factors can result in a cat leading a less active lifestyle, not wanting to go out due to territorial problems or hiding away from stressful situations, and this in turn leads to obesity which can also be a factor. We encounter FLUTD commonly in practice. Reducing stress in the home, increasing water intake (see table below) and keeping cats well exercised and within their weight constraints are helpful strategies in managing cats with FLUTD.



Type of water bowl	Most cats prefer glass, ceramic or stainless steel. Experiment by offering different shapes and sizes of bowl. Most cats like wide, shallow bowls, but some like drinking out of a tall glass or jug.
Fill the bowl to the brim	Most cats do not like to put their heads inside the bowl, so fill it to the brim.
Number of bowls	Water bowls should be available in all areas of the home and the cat should be able to access water easily, without competition from other cats.
Location of the water bowl	The water bowl should not be next to food bowls, litter trays or busy locations.
Consider raising the bowl	Older cats (older than 10 years) often have arthritis, which can make bending over to eat or drink uncomfortable. Water and food bowls can be placed on an upturned bowl or box to lift them by a few inches.
Type of water	Try offering collected rain water, mineral water and tap water and see if your cat has a preference.
Temperature of water	Offer at room temperature, chilled water tends to be less appealing to cats.
Flavoured water	Examples include liquid from a defrosted packet of cooked prawns or a drained tin of tuna in spring water. A flavoured water can be created by poaching chicken or fish in water.

SCARY TIMES ... FIREWORKS!!

It's coming round to that time of year again, with November 5th looming and the start of the party season ahead. Unfortunately for some of our family pets this is a stressful time and it's not just for one night anymore, with many people celebrating New Year with fireworks as well! Although we might see a return to public bonfires and firework displays this year due to the easing in Covid restrictions, many families may still decide to have private bonfire parties rather than mixing with large groups of people, letting off fireworks at home in their own gardens which makes it more difficult for us to avoid and shield our pets if they are fearful.



During firework activity - keep all windows and doors closed, fear can cause animals to look for escapes routes and they may find themselves outside becoming lost and very scared. Preparation is important to minimise fear and stress over this explosive period and this should begin at least 2 weeks before we expect activities to begin. Don't forget pets that live outside such as rabbits and ferrets, start bringing them indoors at night to get them use to this before the firework season starts. If you have aviaries consider covering them over or providing extra places for the birds to take cover.

There are a number of non-prescription calming products available for your pet, either to use in the environment or to be given orally. Please contact the surgery for further details and a chat with one of our nurses about the best solution for your situation. Some products achieve better results if used for a numbers days before the firework activity starts. In some extreme cases, prescription products may be required and your pet will need to be examined by the veterinary surgeon to ensure it is suitable for them and to enable us to prescribe these.



Hides: At other times of the year our canine and feline friends are quite happy to sleep in their usual beds but converting these into hides can help them feel more secure. Provide plenty of blankets so they can burrow, using old jumpers of yours can help reinforce your presence whilst they are in the hide and make your pet feel safer. This doesn't need to be expensive, old cardboard boxes, dog crates, cat baskets will do the job. Remember to put in a bowl of water whilst the hide is being used. In the run up to firework season take your pet to the hide regularly, play with them and give them some food or treats here so they begin to understand it is a safe happy place to go to. Make it accessible at all times so they can go there when they feel the need. If possible, place the hide in a room with no windows or use thick curtains so your pet can't see flashes when fireworks do go off.



Ensure your pet is micro-chipped, if they become lost this will help to ensure a speedy reunion. Whilst out walking with your dog, keep them on the lead and try to keep cats indoors providing them with a litter tray if they don't already use one. Provide your pets with new chews/toys to distract them from what is going on outside. Play music or the TV at a louder level than normal to help to mask any noise from outside, playing with your pet may also help to distract them. Try not to get cross with your pet or make too much of a fuss of them, just remain placid and calm ignoring unwanted behaviour until they begin to relax, then reward the relaxed behaviour.

WELCOME MEGAN!



We are very pleased to welcome Megan Pearson BVMSci, MRCVS to our Companion Animal Veterinary Team. Megan will be joining us in mid October.

Megan graduated from the University of Surrey in 2021. She has a keen interest in all areas of small animal practice, particularly surgery.

Outside of work, Megan enjoys fine food, good company and spending time in the countryside with the dogs.



Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

