



Can Stress Affect Your Cat's Bladder Health?

Cats commonly develop **Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease** (FLUTD) after a stressful event, such as moving house, a new baby or construction work in the household. The reason behind this mechanism is unknown but it's almost as though some of their brain is carried inside their bladders (well not really)!

Clinical signs of FLUTD include:

- Straining to urinate but only producing a few drops or nothing at all
- Pink-coloured urine (due to the presence of blood)
- Urinating in unusual places such as shower recess, bathroom or next to the litter tray

Cats can also develop FLUTD without having a known stressful event prior to signs as there are other causes, including urinary tract infection, bladder stones or crystals blocking the normal flow of urine.

It's important to have your cat examined by a vet because occasionally cats can develop a blocked urethra and are unable to urinate at all, leading to life-threatening consequences if not treated promptly. This is a much higher risk in male cats due to their narrow urethra compared with female cats.

Only 5% of cats that have signs of urinary tract disease have a urinary tract infection, so antibiotics are not warranted in all cases. Instead, your vet will usually attempt to collect a urine sample to get a diagnosis.

Most cats are treated with **anti-inflammatories** and **pain relief** and the underlying stressor addressed. For a blocked bladder, also known as urethral obstruction, emergency treatment is required in order to prevent fatal consequences. This involves an anaesthetic and urinary bladder catheter placement to allow urine flow, and in some cases, intensive care.

So remember to always keep an eye on your cat's toileting habits – it could be a sign that something isn't quite right in the plumbing department!