

Renal & Urinary Disorders

Feline Urinary Tract Infections



Urinary tract infections (UTIs) have been reported to affect 1-2% of cats over the course of their lifetimes and between 2-19% of cats exhibiting signs of lower urinary tract diseases. Although UTIs are not directly influenced by diet, they are associated with several nutritionally responsive conditions or diseases, such as low or high body condition scores, diabetes mellitus, chronic kidney disease, and urolithiasis.

Key Messages

- Feeding cats to maintain ideal body condition may help reduce the risk of a UTI.
 - Research has identified low body condition score as a risk factor for UTIs. This may be due to diminished overall immune status in thin cats.
 - Overweight cats often have difficulty reaching and grooming the urogenital region. Fecal bacteria can contaminate the urogenital area (especially in obese cats with excess skin folds in the region providing a hospitable environment for bacteria) and ascend the urethra to establish a UTI.
- Although data are conflicting, numerous risk factors for UTIs have been suggested, including the presence of other diseases in which nutritional management plays a role, such as diabetes mellitus or chronic kidney disease. A breakdown in the cat's innate immune defense system appears to be a contributing factor.
- UTIs can occur in cats with uroliths. The most common feline uroliths are struvite and calcium oxalate. Nutrition plays an important role in the management of existing struvite urolithiasis and can help reduce the risk of recurrence for both struvite and calcium oxalate uroliths.

Additional Resource

Dorsch, R., Teichmann-Knorrn, S., & Sjetne Lund, H. (2019). Urinary tract infection and subclinical bacteriuria in cats: A clinical update. *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 21(11);1023–1038. doi: 10.1177/1098612X19880435

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.

