

Urinary Tract Infections in Dogs

Pet Health Network Contributors

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Overview

UTI—these three letters stand for “urinary tract infection,” which is commonly seen in veterinary hospitals. The infection can be anywhere in the urinary tract but is commonly seen in the bladder, making it very painful for your pooch to urinate. Females are more likely to develop UTIs than males as bacteria are much more easily able to enter their urinary tract systems through their much wider and shorter urethras.

The reason a dog develops a UTI may not be known (termed idiopathic). On the other hand there are a variety of things that can predispose a dog to UTIs; they include:

- [Bladder stones](#), which start out as microscopic [crystals in the urine](#) and grow in the urinary tract, including the bladder
- Tumors of the bladder or urinary tract
- Structural abnormalities of the urinary tract or, in females, the vulva or vagina
- Diseases such as [diabetes mellitus](#) or [Cushing's syndrome](#)
- Certain medications, especially those that suppress the immune system

The most common sign of a urinary tract infection is [frequent urination](#). Your dog will ask to go out more, may have accidents in the house, and might be uncomfortable when she urinates. You may notice [blood in her urine](#), or a foul odor.

Diagnosis/Treatment

If you suspect your pet may have a urinary tract infection, it's important to bring them to the veterinarian right away. Your veterinarian will perform a thorough physical exam, take a complete history, and may recommend some diagnostic tests.

These tests could include:

- A urinalysis and urine culture to confirm the

urinary tract infection and to evaluate the kidney's ability to concentrate urine

- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver, and pancreatic function, as well as sugar levels
- A complete blood count (CBC) to rule out blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests to ensure your dog isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- A thyroid test to determine if the thyroid gland is producing too little thyroid hormone
- X-rays of the urinary tract to identify if stones or other abnormalities are present
- Abdominal ultrasound to evaluate the urinary tract and identify if stones or other abnormalities are present

If your pooch has been diagnosed with a urinary tract infection, your veterinarian will want to treat any underlying condition that exists, as well as treating the UTI. Your veterinarian will determine the right approach for your pet.

Some options they may suggest are:

- Fluid Therapy to help flush the kidneys and urinary tract
- Antibiotics to treat the [bacterial infection](#)
- Pain medication, if needed
- A prescription diet to help address and/or prevent future issues with bladder stones
- Additional testing for some of the potential underlying causes listed above

Prevention

While you may not be able to prevent your best friend from getting a urinary tract infection the first time, you can help prevent a recurrence by providing proper care. It is very important to follow all instructions including giving all medications and coming in for follow-up visits and tests.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.