



URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS IN DOGS

Like humans, dogs can suffer from urinary tract infections (UTI) or problems. Symptoms include urinating frequently and producing small amounts of urine, crying or straining when urinating, blood tinged urine, and desiring to go outside often to urinate. If your dog shows these symptoms, contact your veterinarian for appropriate treatment.

Obtaining a urine sample can be accomplished one of two ways; the veterinarian can insert a small needle on a syringe into the bladder from the outside and collect a sterile sample. This is easily accomplished by your veterinarian with essentially no pain or risk to your pet. Another way is to obtain a “catch” sample from your pet. Sterile samples are the best, as it does not result in contamination of the sample by bacteria from outside the urinary tract.

Your veterinarian will analyze the urine (urinalysis) and examine a small amount of the urine under a microscope. If bacteria and /or white blood cells are seen during this examination, your veterinarian will suggest that the urine be cultured. If bacteria are grown on culture, it means that an infection is present and an antibiotic “sensitivity test” may be performed on the bacteria. This determines the antibiotics to which the infection is most sensitive. In this way, your veterinarian can select the right antibiotic to kill the infection.

If the pet has three or more episodes of UTI in the course of 1 year, the infections are said to be recurrent. In this special and uncommon case, once the infection has been eliminated (culture-negative urine), a daily dose of an antibiotic may be given on a long-term basis to prevent future episodes of UTI. This low-dose, preventive treatment is usually effective in preventing future UTI. Frequent urine cultures are necessary, however, to verify this fact for the individual pet.

It is not known why pets have UTI. It is known that certain diseases, certain types of medicines, and certain breeds of dogs are associated with UTI more often than normal. It is also known that it is important to recognize and treat UTI because, if left untreated, UTI can cause serious kidney ailment and bladder stones, as well as potentially serious infections in other parts of the body.