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Urinary Blockage In Male Cats

In the male cat, the urethra connecting the urinary bladder to the penis has a very narrow diameter. When mucus, blood, bacteria, or mineral deposits occlude this passage, the cat can no longer urinate. When full beyond capacity, the bladder pressure stops the flow of urine from the kidneys, creating the possibility of a life threatening situation.

Early signs include: frequent licking of the penis, frequent trips to the litter box, urinating in unusual spots, straining to urinate, and bloody urine. As the condition progresses, one may see no urine being passed, tenderness in abdomen, general weakness, loss of appetite and vomiting.

If your cat is blocked, intensive therapy may be necessary for a minimum of 24 hours. Treatment includes fluid therapy, bladder catheterization, and the use of various drugs to counteract shock and toxic changes.

A medical management program, including prescription diets will be discussed, or possibly a direct surgical approach will be recommended for recurrent blockage. The surgical procedure is called a urethrostomy, and eliminates the narrow portion of the cats urethra. This surgery creates a larger diameter outflow tract for urination. Cystitis occasionally develops postoperatively, due to the shorter length of the urethra, but which is easily controlled with antibiotics.