

FELINE IDIOPATHIC CYSTITIS



(FIC)

What are the signs of FIC?

Clinical signs include:

- Straining when urinating
- Presence of blood in the urine
- Urination in inappropriate areas in the house
- Attempts to urinate with no urine production
- Pain while urinating

What causes FIC?

FIC is related to a defect in the way a cat handles stress. A parallel in human medicine would be a person who gets a recurring upset stomach from stress. Similarly, cats can get a recurring bladder inflammation from stress. Examples of triggers that can cause stress and trigger an episode include:

- Stress in the people at home (final exams, arguments, sickness, etc)
- Another person or animal moving in or out
- Construction in the home or outdoors
- Weather change or earthquake
- New furniture
- Moving to a new home
- Changing to a new brand of food
- People in the house changing schedules

How is FIC diagnosed?

FIC is a diagnosis of exclusion. This means that there is no single test which can be performed to diagnose it, the only way is excluding other causes which can cause the same signs. Other possible causes with the same signs include urine tract infections and bladder stones.

Diagnostic tests will include blood tests, urine tests and performing imaging tests to assess for possible stones or other abnormalities (this can include x-rays and ultrasound scan)

How is FIC treated?

1

Dealing with an active episode of FIC.

When a cat has an episode it can vary in severity.

A severe episode could result in obstructive FIC, which occurs when the urethra (tube that connects the bladder with the outside) becomes blocked. If this is the case, the cat will need to be anaesthetised and the urethra unblocked by placing a urinary catheter. If this is not possible, surgery will be required.

If the cat does not have a urethral blockage, then the episode will be managed with pain relief, anti-inflammatories and sometimes urethral relaxants. Cats with FIC usually do not need antibiotics as typically there is no bacterial infection involved. The stress of being in the hospital can make the episode worse so the episodes are commonly managed as an out-patient basis if possible, however urethral obstruction cannot be managed as an out-patient.

2

Chronic changes.

What seems to be the most effective approach is addressing the underlying stressor which caused the problem in the first place.

Effective Multimodal Environmental Modification (MEMO) creates conditions that permit the cat to feel safe and to have unrestricted access to species-appropriate novelty, activity, and interactions with other animals (including humans). It includes:

- **Resources.** Follow the "1+1" rule: 1 for each cat in the home, plus 1 more. This apply to all resources (particularly resting areas, food bowls, water bowls, and litter boxes).
- **Space.** Each cat needs a safe refuge (bed, box etc.) Cats need opportunities to scratch (both horizontal and vertical surfaces), climb, hide, and rest, preferably in multiple locations in the home.
- **Food and water**
 - Cats prefer to eat in a safe and quiet location, when no other animals or people disturb them. It is recommended that cats with this condition eat wet food if possible and attempting to encourage water intake (examples that may work depending on the cat are having multiple bowls available, fountains or adding the water of boiled chicken for flavouring the water)
 - Natural cat feeding behaviour also includes predatory activities. These behaviours may be simulated by hiding small amounts of food around the house or by putting food into food into puzzles.

+ Play.

- It is recommended to enhance interactions with your cat (regular play and affection)
- Identifying a cat's prey preferences enables you to provide toys that your cat will be most likely to play with. For example, some cats prefer to chase birds, whereas others prefer to chase mice, lizards, or bugs. In contrast to play, some cats seem to prefer to be petted and groomed.

+ Reduce changes

- Palliating stressors in the household (predictable routines and slow household changes are ideal)

What is the long-term prognosis for cats with FIC?

Recurring episodes are common. Over 50% of cats with FIC will have a recurrence within one year after the first episode, so affected cats should be monitored for recurring clinical signs.



Visit us:
www.southfields.co.uk

Southfields
veterinary specialists

PART OF
LINNAEUS