

# Urinary Tract Infection

A bladder infection occurs when microbes (usually bacteria) get into the bladder and multiply. Any pet, cat or dog can get a bladder infection, though females are more likely to get one. Because the disease irritates the organ, it increases the pet's urge to urinate. Frequent squatting or straining without a lot of results is the biggest sign a pet has a bladder infection.

## Symptoms:

- Frequent Urination / Squatting
- Discolored / Bloody Urine
- Increased water consumption
- Lethargy

## Causes:

Urine in the bladder is normally sterile unless bacteria travel up the urethra and cause an infection. Bacteria may be introduced from the nearby rectal area or from the genital tract. Conditions such as diabetes can increase the risk of developing bladder infections, as can medications that depress the immune system, including high-dose or long-term corticosteroids.

## Complications:

In long-standing infections, the bladder tissue can thicken and scar, creating more places for bacteria to grow. Long-term infection also increases the chances that infection will spread upstream to the kidneys or cause bladder stones to form.

## Treatment:

An uncomplicated bladder infection can normally be diagnosed based on your pet's history and a urinalysis. In unique cases a urine sample might be sent to a laboratory to determine the specific bacteria involved (through a culture and sensitivity test) as well as an effective antibiotic for treatment. Treatment for the infection includes a course of antibiotics. We recommend testing the urine after antibiotics to make sure the infection is fully eradicated.

Abdominal X-rays or ultrasound imaging are sometimes needed to look for stones, tumors, or other abnormalities involving the bladder. If stones occur they must be removed through surgery or eliminated via a special diet.