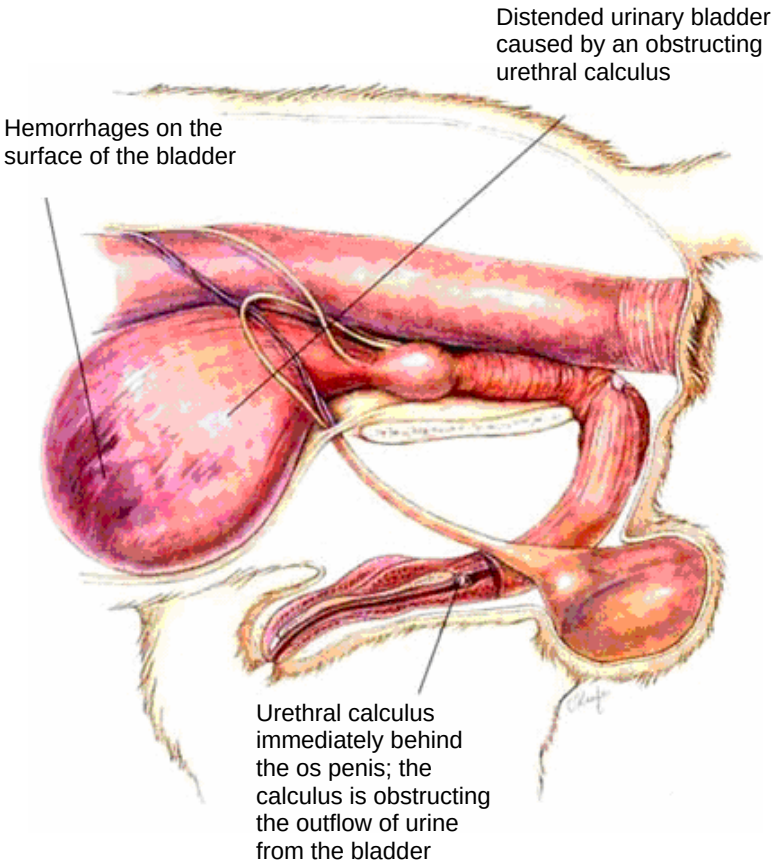
Client Information Series

Canine Urethral Obstruction



Canine Urethral Obstruction

Diagnostic Plan
History
Physical examination
Urethral palpation
Abdominal Palpation
X-rays of the urinary tract
Urinalysis
Urine culture
Blood work
Analysis of passed bladder stones
Ultrasound

Therapeutic Plan
Emptying of the bladder
Fluid therapy
Flushing of the urethral calculi into the bladder
Surgery

Nutritional Plan
For dissolution, the proper calculolytic food
To aid in prevention or recurrence, a food that allows the body to produce the appropriate urine pH and avoids excesses of the urolith's precursors
If surgery is necessary, a diet adequate for tissue repair

Canine Urethral Obstruction

Obstruction of the urethra – the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the outside – can occur in male and female dogs, but is much more common in male dogs. This difference in incidence is due to the longer, narrower urethra in male dogs. In addition, male dogs have a bone in the penis called the os penis. The os penis can't expand as soft tissues can so most obstructions occur here. This client education sheet will help you learn more about urethral obstruction and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Canine Urethral Obstruction

Causes

The most common urethral obstruction develops when your dog has bladder stones and one or more of these stones lodge in the urethra. Other conditions that narrow or completely obstruct the urethra include: inflammation due to bacterial infections or crystals (the building blocks of bladder stones); trauma; tumors; and diseases of the prostate gland.

Signs

Your pet may exhibit the following symptoms: frequent urination; dribbling of urine; straining to urinate; bloody urine; loss of appetite; vomiting; and pain. If your pet can't urinate, take it to your veterinarian as quickly as possible.

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will perform an in-depth physical examination including a rectal exam and palpation (examination by touching) of the urethra and urinary bladder. These procedures may disclose an enlarged prostate gland or stones in your pet's urethra and urinary bladder. Other tests that help your veterinarian diagnose the cause of urethral obstruction include: examination of urine with the aid of a microscope to reveal the presence of crystals, blood, and bacteria; urine culture; blood tests; x-rays; qualitative analysis of voided bladder stones; ultrasound; and surgical biopsy of urinary tract tissues.

Treatment and Home Care

If your pet's urethra is blocked, your veterinarian will hospitalize your pet and reestablish urine flow. This is usually accomplished by inserting a catheter into the urethra and flushing crystals and stones back into the bladder. Anesthesia is usually necessary for this procedure. Occasionally, stones lodged in the urethra will need to be removed surgically. Fluid therapy corrects dehydration, restores normal electrolyte balance, and hastens the removal of urinary wastes from the bloodstream.

Because a urethral obstruction isn't a disease itself, but rather a sign of a disease, your veterinarian will correct the cause of urethral obstruction after urine flow is reestablished. Castration, for example, is the treatment of choice for some types of prostate gland enlargements. Many types of bladder stones can be dissolved by feeding special foods and giving drugs, but surgery may be needed.

Once you've taken your pet home, you'll need to follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully and monitor your pet to make sure reobstruction doesn't occur. You should provide access to fresh, clean water and give all prescribed medications. If surgery was performed, you should restrict your pet's activity as directed by your vet and check the incision daily. In addition, you may need to return to the hospital for suture removal and follow-up lab tests and x-rays.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has bladder stones, your veterinarian may recommend a special food to dissolve the stones in the bladder. These foods work by reducing the building blocks (amino acids, magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium) that make up bladder stones. They also affect the urine pH and increase urination to help flush the urinary tract. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® s/d® Canine Dissolution for dissolution of struvite stones, antibacterials if bacteria are present and Prescription Diet® u/d® Canine Non-Struvite Urinary Tract Health and medications for dissolution of some stones. Up to 50 percent of all dogs with bladder stones have a recurrence of the problem. After bladder stones are dissolved or removed surgically, special foods can help manage nutritional risks, such as excess calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium in the pet's normal food. Foods that reduce the risk of struvite stones include Prescription Diet® c/d® Canine Urinary Tract Health. Foods that aid in reducing the risk of other stone types include Prescription Diet® u/d® Canine Non-Struvite Urinary Tract Health.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by

Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____ (Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.