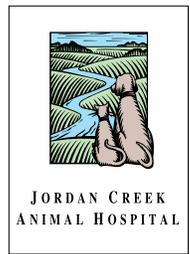




# FALL 2014 Gazette

☞ newsletter for people and their pets



3401 E.P. True Parkway  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

in this issue:

FLUTD

Adoption

National Technician Week

Hospital News

## Is Your Feline Straying from the Litter Box?

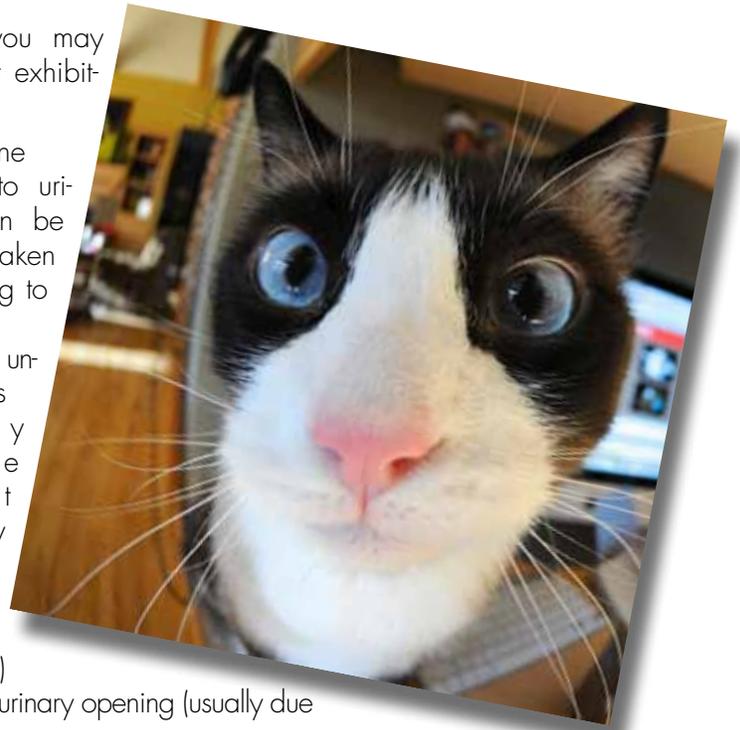
Urinating in odd places, outside of the litter box could indicate a behavioral problem or a medical problem, and sometimes the difference is not always clear cut. Cats often will urinate in unusual places to get their owner's attention when something is medically wrong and they are not feeling well. Sometimes cats will urinate in unusual places in an effort to reassert their claim to territory. This need often arises from psychological stress. Psychological stress over territory is associated with a disease state called *Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease*. However, some cats have purely behavioral motivations without illness and some simply have litter box aversions.

This article will focus on the disease state Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD), a sterile inflammation of the bladder (no urinary tract infection is present). *While psychological stress is a cause for this condition*, there are other theorized causes for this disease including diet and environmental stress. This syndrome has been described in cats for nearly 100 years and continues to be a common condition. The main obstacle in eradicating this condition seems to be that any number of conditions that cause inflammation of a cat's bladder (i.e., infection, tumors, bladder stones, urinary crystals, etc) will end up producing the same symptoms.

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) is the term describing the following group of clin-

ical signs you may see your cat exhibiting:

- Bloody urine
- Straining to urinate (\*can be easily mistaken for straining to defecate)
- Urinating in unusual places
- Urinary blockage (\*almost exclusively a male cat problem that is an emergency)
- Licking the urinary opening (usually due to pain)



### What Happens to Cats with FLUTD?

There is a continued struggle to completely understand this common but confusing syndrome, but some features of FLUTD have been observed:

- The lower urinary tract symptoms described above tend to recur or are cyclical.
- There seems to be an association with environmental stress.

*Continued on next page*

Contact us by calling 515-224-9500 or visit our website at [www.jordancreekanimalhospital.com](http://www.jordancreekanimalhospital.com) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/jordancreekanimalhospital](http://www.facebook.com/jordancreekanimalhospital)



# Is Your Feline Straying from the Litter Box?

Continued from page 1

FLUTD seems to be a younger cat problem, with episodes decreasing in frequency as the cat gets older.

Numerous therapies have been used to curtail the "episodes" of FLUTD once it has started, but because the episodes seem to last 1-2 weeks regardless of treatment, it's hard to be sure what's working.

As difficult as it is to address an episode in progress, more success has been achieved in preventing future episodes.

## Why Do Only Some Cats get FLUTD?

We know that cats that get this syndrome have a unique imbalance in the way their brain controls hormones. In other words, these cats are unusually sensitive to environmental stress and, due to a complicated cascade of metabolic events, stress manifests in the lower urinary tract.

## What Is the Therapy for Cats with FLUTD?

*There are two parts of therapy:*

### Treating the current episode or flare-up

Treatment for a FLUTD episode typically involves a multi-modal approach. It can involve changing your cat's diet to a prescription food that will alter the urine concentration and pH. It could include a variety of medications that aim to treat the actual inflammation and spasms actively occurring during the episode and/or therapy aimed at decreasing stress which may have started the whole episode in the first place. Your veterinarian will create a specific treatment plan based on each episode of FLUTD your cat experiences.

### Preventing future episodes

Many management techniques have been proposed to prevent further episodes of this painful condition, but only some have been proven effective:

- Feed primarily canned food and increase water consumption.
- Canned cat food is 80% water, so switching will increase your cat's water intake.
- Fill the water bowl while your cat is watching.
- Get a water drinking fountain.
- Environmental stress can be minimized by allowing choices for your cat in terms of where to play, rest, eat, and eliminate.
- Each cat in the home should have the opportunity to play with the owner or with another cat if he chooses to.
- Each cat should be able to move freely about her home including climbing if she chooses to.



- Each cat should have convenient access to a private rest area where other animals will not disturb him or an escape route should he be bothered. There should be no loud appliances in the rest area that might suddenly come on and be frightening.
- Scratching posts should be available.
- Toys should be rotated and replaced regularly.
- Each cat should be able to choose warmer and cooler areas within the home.
- Ideally, there should be a litter box for each cat, plus one extra. Litter boxes should be located in well-ventilated areas and should be kept clean. Boxes should be washed out weekly with a minimally scented detergent. Unscented clumping litter seems to be best. If there is more than one floor in the home, there should be a box on each floor. Litter boxes should be private enough that other animals will not be bothering the cat and loud appliances will not startle the cat during litter box use.
- Each cat should have his/her own food and water bowls. Feeding/watering stations should be safe so that other animals (like dogs) will not be startling the cat. Bowls should be washed daily.
- The brand, flavor, or format of the food (dry vs. canned) should be kept fairly constant. If it is changed, allow your cat a choice of new food vs. old food at least for a while before changing over, and do not change more than once per month.

Reference:

Brooks, C. Wendy. "Feline Idiopathic Cystitis" Veterinary Information Network. January 1, 2001.

# 20 TIPS for Adopting Your Future Furry Friend

## How do I choose?

"There are so many sweet faces looking at me, begging to be adopted, potential" adopters say to themselves. It is a difficult decision and should not be taken lightly. Rescue animals already may have been through the wringer—maybe brought in as a stray, surrendered for financial reasons, a divorce, behavioral issues, or something as simple as the cute little puppy turned out to be really big and is no longer wanted. There are so many reasons why there are so many homeless pets out there needing a good forever home. These 20 tips will help you find the right fit for you and your four legged friend.

**#1** Ask yourself, why you want a pet. It should never be a spontaneous decision. Think of this decision as an adoption for life...not for the moment.

**#2** Analyze your lifestyle. Find a pet compatible with your daily routine. For instance, if you are normally a sedentary person at home, watching a lot of TV when not working, it would be best to adopt a low maintenance breed. When you pinpoint what kind of lifestyle you have, you can then decide what breeds would work best for you.

**#3** Write a wish list. What qualities are you looking for in your ideal pet? Active, low maintenance, or a couch potato? You can jot down exactly what type of pet would best suit you and research breeds from there.

**#4** Research breeds. You can continue to narrow down the list by looking into everything that breed has to offer.

**#5** Ensure all family members are on-board with the adoption. For instance, if someone is allergic to dogs, then it might not be a good idea for the family to get one.

**#6** Once everyone is in agreement,



©iStock.com/JCAHDVM

then the search for a rescue league can begin. Websites such as Petfinder and Adopt-A-Pet allow you to see what is available in the shelters near you.

**#7** When you have decided on the facility and you find a pet that you would like to meet, ask to be in a separate room with him/her so that you can see how he/she interacts with everyone. You can see what kind of personality that pet has by spending some one-on-one quiet time.

**#8** Do make sure that you talk to a shelter volunteer or adoption counselor about that pet. They can give you great insight on that pet's history and temperament because they interact with the dog on a daily basis.

**#9** Don't stress about the paperwork. Some people worry about their application being denied—just be honest and open. The rescue leagues are not judging you, but making sure that you are set up for this type of pet.

**#10** Don't fall in love with a face, rather fall in love with a soul.

**#11** Don't get caught up in fads or trends. Don't adopt because it is the hot new TV show's dog, or because it

is what a celebrity owns. Adopt because shelter pets are likely to bond deeply with their new owners and blossom into the perfect pet for you.

**#12** Take your time before making that final decision. Remember, this pet wants to be in it for the long haul, and so should you.

**#13** Be patient. The right pet is out there for you and eventually you will find the right pet for your family.

**#14** Be realistic. Your adopted pet will not be perfect. There are going to be challenges and time is needed to settle into the new environment.

**#15** Set the pet up for success. Introduce your pet slowly to certain areas of the house. If you adopted a cat, put him/her in one room with a litter box and food to get acclimated to the new environment. If you adopt a dog, introduce him/her to the crate that day and begin obedience training. When a dog is in training it builds their confidence and security and sets up a bond between owner and dog right from the start.

**#16** Plan for future expenses and care. Look into pet insurance or start setting aside money for a pet emergency account.

**#17** Have your veterinarian, trainer, and groomer picked out in advance.

**#18** Ask for help before panicking. If you are having problems with your new member of the family, reach out to your veterinarian or shelter before giving up. It takes time for everyone to settle into this new life.

**#19** Once again, be patient. Don't give up on your pet too soon and relinquish him/her back to the shelter.

**#20** Listen to what your heart is telling you. There is a reason why you chose the pet you did, and that is because that one chose you too.



## National Veterinary Technician Week

**A big thank you** to everyone that donated money and volunteered during our *Free Nail Trim Saturdays* for the **American Diabetes Association**. We had a total of four Saturdays that promoted free "mani/pedis" for both cats and dogs. With your help we ended up raising over \$2000 during this event which went to the American Diabetes Association of Iowa. A group of JCAH Volunteers attended the *StepOut to Stop Diabetes 5k Walk* at Principal Park on September 20th. We are truly grateful to everyone that helped out with this event, whether it was by donating funds or volunteering time! Thank you!



**Congratulations** to Dr. Varley and her husband, Chase, on the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Claire. She was born on August 15th at 5:11 PM. Everyone is doing well and we look forward to her return in November.

### Monthly Meetings

The doctors and staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital think that monthly employee meetings are essential to promoting communication and educational opportunities. Because of this, we will be closed from 1:30-2:30 PM on the following Wednesdays: **October 22, November 19, December 10.**

October 12<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> is National Veterinary Technician Week. As a client, you will see your technicians in the exam rooms holding your pets and asking about their lives at home, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. Technicians are educated to perform many critical functions around the hospital, including drawing blood, placing IV catheters, taking radiographs, anesthetizing, and performing dental prophylaxis. All of our JCAH technicians are Registered Veterinary Technicians, meaning they all attended college to earn this specialized degree. We would like to thank each and every one of them for all they do to ensure your pets have an excellent experience here at JCAH.

## MEET THE STAFF/our editors for this issue of Pet Gazette



**Dr. Cody Mingus**, was born in Falls City, Nebraska. She attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, receiving her Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Science in 2006. She enrolled in veterinary school at Iowa State University and received her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 2010. After practicing at a pet hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, she joined the staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in 2012.

Dr. Mingus and her husband have 2 dogs, Gus and Stewy, and 1 cat, Noodle. In her free time, she enjoys hiking with her dogs, camping, boating, attending outdoor concerts, watching movies at home, and spending time with family.



**Mistee Martin**, RVT, grew up in Horton, Iowa and went on to obtain her Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Veterinary Technology from Kirkwood Community College. Before joining the staff of Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in October 2005, she worked at Den Herder Veterinary Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa and Klein Animal Clinic in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Mistee shares a cat, Kitano, with her husband Patrick and two sons Marik and Asher. When she's not at work, Mistee enjoys camping, playing sand volleyball, going to Iowa State football games and relaxing on their deck by the lake.