

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT NOW?

Once the urethral obstruction has been relieved, your cat will most likely be hospitalized for 36-48 hours. The urethral catheter is left in place for 24-48 hours, the urine collected and quantified, and then the catheter is removed. It is important that your cat is observed to urinate without straining prior to discharge.

Prevention of a reoccurring obstruction requires knowledge of the underlying cause. Prescription diets are available that can minimize crystal formation or dissolve stones. Increasing water intake (by feeding moist cat food) can be used to manage many cases of crystal formation. Water intake can be encouraged by allowing cats to drink from running faucets and fountains. When stones, strictures or masses exist, then surgery may be necessary to remove the obstruction and/or widen the opening of the urethra. It is important to discuss with your veterinarian different options for your cat to minimize recurrence. A surgical procedure called a perineal urethrostomy can be done to enlarge the diameter of the urethra and prevent obstruction of the bladder if the problem recurs.



YOUR PET IS IN GOOD HANDS

The Animal Emergency Center is open 24 hours a day to provide emergency and critical care treatment for your family pet. Our caregivers work closely with you and your primary care veterinarian to provide the most affordable care possible for your ill or injured dog, cat, bird, reptile or small mammal. Our team consists of emergency and critical care veterinary and technician specialists, as well as specialists in the fields of surgery, internal medicine, exotic animal medicine, dentistry, and oncology. Our staff doctors, receptionists and nurses have all received special training to aid you and your pet in your time of need.



Directions

From I-43, take Silver Spring Drive West Exit for 0.9 miles. AEC is on the north side of Silver Spring, just past Green Bay Road. Turn directly from Silver Spring into the AEC parking lot.

From I-45, take Silver Spring Drive East Exit for 6.0 miles. AEC is on the north side of Silver Spring, just past Teutonia Avenue. Turn left on Crestwood Boulevard at the light to enter the AEC parking lot from this direction.

**Animal Emergency Center
2100 W. Silver Spring Dr.
Glendale, WI 53209**

414-540-5710

FELINE URETHRAL OBSTRUCTION



A life-threatening emergency...

Animal Emergency Center



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WHAT IS FELINE URETHRAL OBSTRUCTION?



The urethra is the small passageway for urine to pass from the urinary bladder to outside the body for urination. An obstruction of the urethra can be caused by several problems. Most commonly, a hard plug consisting of a crystalline matrix will obstruct the outflow of urine from the urinary bladder. Other less common causes include kidney or bladder stones, strictures, non-matrix plugs from inflammation, and tumors. It is very rare that there is an infection associated with the causes of obstruction.



A TRUE EMERGENCY



Many of the toxins that are in the blood normally leave the body through the urine. When your cat can no longer empty his urinary bladder, these toxins accumulate within the blood. High concentrations of these toxins can lead to life-threatening problems:

- **High potassium** in the blood is the most life-threatening problem. This toxin will slow down the electrical conduction within the heart, leading to low blood pressure and eventually cardiac arrest, if left untreated.
- **Acidosis** can cause the heart to have an abnormal rhythm. The cells throughout the body are not able to produce enough energy and will begin to die if left untreated.
- **Low calcium** can cause tremors, seizures and abnormal heart rhythms.
- The **wall of the urinary bladder** will stretch to an abnormally large size, similar to a balloon over-filled with water. This can cause intense pain, and weakening of the bladder to the point of bladder wall rupture and peritonitis.

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EMERGENCY TREATMENT



It is important to relieve urethral obstruction as soon as possible. The heart must be protected throughout these procedures and aggressive fluid therapy is necessary to help the kidneys filter out the toxins and dilute the debris in the bladder. Testing to determine the underlying cause of the obstruction is essential for appropriate therapy. Our veterinarians will work with you to form the best diagnostic and treatment plan for your cat. The following procedures and treatments may be recommended:

- **Intravenous catheter** to administer drugs and fluids.
- **ECG** and medications to improve the heart rhythm.
- **Blood samples** for testing electrolytes and kidney function.
- **Intravenous fluids** to help the kidneys rapidly filter out the toxins and dilute the urine.
- **Pain medications and sedatives** to relieve the obstruction.
- **Unblock the urethra** with a stiff catheter and fluids to back-flush the plug or stone from the urethra.
- **Urinalysis** to determine if crystals or infection are present.
- **Placement of a soft urethral catheter** for 24-48 hours to ensure the patency of the outflow tract.
- **Bladder flush** to remove crystals/debris
- **Radiographs and ultrasound** to look for stones, masses or large amounts of crystals and debris in the urinary bladder.

Occasionally the veterinarian is unable to relieve the obstruction by urethral catheterization. Should that occur, other options to include direct bladder catheterization and surgery will be discussed.