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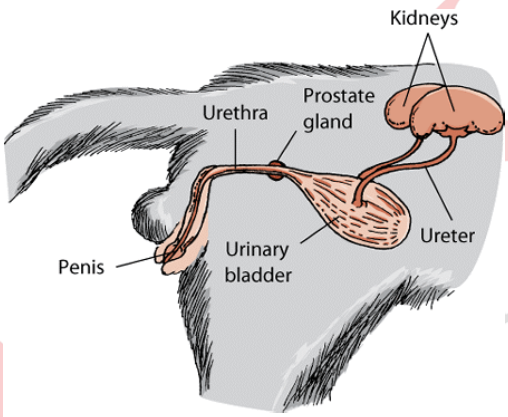
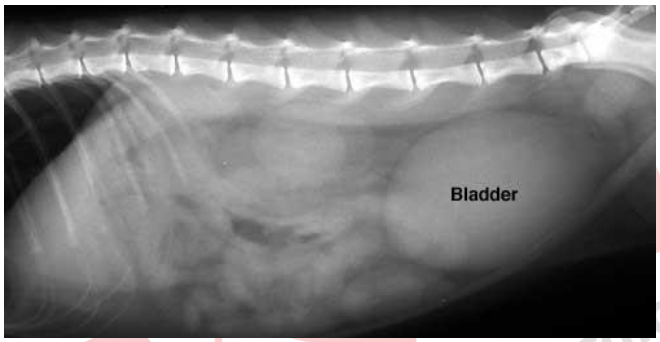
| **Perineal Urethrostomy, Blocked Cat** | Perineal urethrostomy is a surgical procedure used to create a new opening of the urethra in the perineal region of the pet. It is mostly commonly performed on male cats with a urethral obstruction. The urethra is the tubular portion of the urinary tract system that exists from the bladder connecting to the urethral orifice by which urine is evacuated from the body. Male cats develop urethral obstructions more commonly than female cats due to the anatomical narrowing of the penile urethral in male cats. The urethra can become blocked with stones, mucous plugs, blood clots, or tumors. Feline lower urinary tract disease or feline urologic syndrome is a condition of the lower urinary tract that encompasses cystitis (inflammation of the bladder), bacterial infection of the urinary bladder, and urethral obstruction with crystalized minerals, mucous, and/or blood clots that block the outflow of urine.<br><br>  <br><br>Image of the urinary tract anatomy of the male cat.<br><br>Signs and Symptoms: Signs of a pet with a urethral obstruction may include:<br>• Abdominal pain<br>• Straining to urinate<br>• Frequent urinations<br>• Unproductive urinations<br>• Painful urinations/vocalization when urinating<br>• Hematuria (blood in the urine)<br>• Urinating outside of the litter box<br>• Lethargy<br>• Anorexia |

Diagnosis: Diagnosis of a urethral obstruction begins with a physical examination. The veterinarian will often feel a large bladder and abdominal pain on palpation of the pet's abdomen. Diagnostic tests will include a complete blood count and blood biochemistry profile to evaluate the patient's kidney function and systemic illness. Additionally, abdominal radiographs and/or abdominal ultrasound may be performed to confirm the diagnosis and evaluate the bladder for stones. At the time the patient is unobstructed a urinalysis and urine culture/sensitivity will be taken. Contrast cystourethrogram (radiographs of the urethra and bladder with contrast) may be performed if a urethral tear is suspected.




Radiograph of the abdomen of a cat with a urethral obstruction. Notice the large, distended urinary bladder.

Treatment: Urethral obstruction is life-threatening and requires emergency treatment. Once the diagnosis of urethral obstruction is made, the pet will be sedated or given general anesthesia in order to pass a catheter into the urethral to flush to urethral plug or stone into the bladder and empty the urine from the bladder. The bladder will also be flushed to try to remove any remaining sediment. The urethral catheter will usually be kept in place for approximately 24 -48 hours to allow inflammation of the bladder and urethral to lessen. If the pet has bladder stones, then a cystotomy is recommended to remove the stones from the bladder. If the urethral obstruction cannot be unobstructed with catheterization or if the urethral obstruction is recurring, then a perineal urethrostomy is necessary. Perineal urethrostomy is performed by surgically removing the penis and using the wider portion of the perineal urethra as the new opening. This new opening is made by suturing the urethral mucosa to the skin in the perineal region of the pet. Potential complications may include stricture, self-trauma, urinary tract infections, and bleeding.

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| | Postoperative care: Postoperative care will include intravenous fluid therapy, antibiotics, pain medication, monitoring the kidney values, monitoring hematuria, monitoring for anemia, monitoring urine output, and monitoring for recurrence of urethral obstruction. The pet will be recommended a urinary tract diet based on urinalysis results and/or urinary bladder stone analysis. An Elizabethan collar will need to be worn until the perineal urethrostomy site is healed. If perineal urethrostomy skin sutures were placed, then the pet will typically need sedation at the time of suture removal in order to remove the sutures and evaluate the new urethral opening. The pet will usually be discharged with an antibiotic and pain medication and instructions to use paper cat litter until the urethrostomy site is healed.<br><br>Prognosis: The prognosis for cats having a perineal urethrostomy for urethral obstruction is good. Perineal urethrostomy does not prevent cystitis (bladder inflammation) and bladder stone formation, therefore, some cats can have recurrent clinical signs of Feline Urologic Syndrome. |