

## Bladder Stones

**Is your cat suffering from a bladder infection? Learn to recognize the symptoms.**

Uroliths or bladder stones are less common than they were 15 years ago because of new nutritional information and cat food reformulation. However, they are still found, particularly in middle-aged cats. Stone analysis determines the cause, allowing risk management to minimize recurrence. If bladder infection triggers stone formation, the cause would be diagnosed as bacterial during stone analysis.

Mineral crystals can also be a causative agent. The formation of these "rocks" is like an oyster creating a pearl around a grain of sand. If crystals of magnesium ammonium phosphate or struvite are found during urinalysis, it is possible to use a special diet prescribed by your veterinarian as the sole source of nutrition and to cause dissolution of the struvite stones. This process takes time, though. Surgical removal of the stones via cystotomy provides immediate relief, making surgery a viable option.

Usually bladder infection/bladder stone patients are miserable. They exhibit signs such as frequent urination, straining to urinate, blood-tinged urine and excessive grooming of the perineal area.