

# Urinary Incontinence

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## Overview

Urinary incontinence is the loss of voluntary control of urination, often resulting in leaking. Normal urination requires that the nerves and muscles of the bladder work properly.

The most common form of incontinence in dogs is called "primary sphincter mechanism" incontinence and is thought to be caused by weakness of the urethral muscle. It is most common in middle-aged medium- to large-size spayed female dogs.

Urinary incontinence can have neurogenic (problems from the nerves that work the bladder) and non-neurogenic causes. Neurogenic causes of incontinence include those that are caused by abnormalities of parts of the nervous system involved in regulation of urination. Non-neurogenic causes of incontinence over-distension of the bladder due to partial obstruction, hormone-responsive incontinence, incontinence associated with urinary tract infection and abnormalities present at birth such as a misplaced ureteral opening (ectopic ureter).

## Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Urinary incontinence is generally diagnosed by physical examination and history as well as a urinalysis, urine culture, bloodwork and X-rays. In some cases, contrast dye studies to evaluate for congenital abnormalities and bladder position may be helpful.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the incontinence, underlying cause, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Depending on the cause, some animals will benefit from surgery, catheterization or antibiotics. If the cause of the incontinence is not known, some dogs will benefit from a drug to help the urethral muscles (phenylpropanolamine) and female dogs may benefit from estrogen supplementation. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

**What to Watch for\*:**

- Dribbling of urine
- Finding of wet spots where the pet was sleeping
- Irritated skin from contact with urine

*\*Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*