

# Cystitis in Cats

One of the most common problems we see in cats is cystitis. This can be due to a number of reasons but two of the most common are lack of water intake and stress.

Below is some advice to help counteract these problems.

## Methods for increasing water intake:-

1. **Consider a wet food diet** - wet food contains approximately 70% water compared to 10% in dry food.
2. **Keep all bowls clean** - cats like fresh water, provide fresh water daily.
3. **Try different water bowls** - some cats prefer ceramic or glass to metal or plastic bowls. Also, always keep bowls filled to the brim as cats don't like their whiskers to touch the edges of a bowl. Some cats like multiple bowls.
4. **Consider bottled or running water** - some cats dislike the impurities found in tap water. Others like the increased oxygenation provided by running water - consider a water fountain or leaving a tap running slightly for periods of the day.
5. **Try flavoured water** - can make ice cubes from the juice in tuna tins to flavour the water.

## Could your cat be stressed?

Several things can cause stress in cats, many of which may not be obvious to us. Below are various causes of stress in cats and what we can do to help counteract them.

1. **Inter-cat conflicts** - fighting between cats living together or in the neighbourhood. If within the house provide separate areas for each cat to eat, sleep, toilet and play. If outside be aware if you have cat flaps that unwanted cats could come through these.
2. **New people or animals in the house** - new pets, babies or house guests can also cause stress to your cat. Provide a safe space for the cat to escape to.
3. **Changes in the home environment** - any change in the environment can be stressful to cats. This could be as simple as a new food bowl, litter tray or moving furniture around or more major such as build work/renovations or moving house. Again try to provide somewhere safe for the cat to escape to. Also try to plan ahead - if you are about to move house or have major work done around the house there are various products including natural medications and plug ins which can be used to try to keep the cat calm during these stressful times.
4. **Litter tray issues** - keep litter trays clean and change them regularly. In multi-cat households we recommend the number of litter trays should be the number of cats + 1 (i.e. for 2 cats have 3 litter trays, 3 cats 4 litter trays etc).
5. **Avoid sudden changes in diet** - cats are creatures of habit, a sudden change in diet can be stressful for some cats. Keep the food and water bowls in a quiet area of the house.
6. **Visits to the cattery or vets can be stressful** - again calming agents can be used for this. Medicating a cat can also be stressful so discuss this with your vet if this happens as there may be alternative products that can be used.