

How To Express Your Pet's Bladder

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SUMMARY:

- 1) Bladder expression should be attempted 2 to 3 times a day.
- 2) If you cannot get your pet to urinate in over 24 hours, seek emergency veterinary care.
- 3) If your pet is dribbling urine, their bladder may be dangerously full and you need to seek emergency veterinary care.
- 4) Watch carefully for symptoms of urinary tract infection. Symptoms include unusual color or odor to the urine.

EXPLANATION:

Some pets with neurologic problems are unable to urinate without assistance. Urine that cannot leave the body via normal urination becomes trapped in the bladder. This build up of urine can cause permanent bladder damage and other serious health problems if not removed promptly. Bladder expression helps your pet urinate until they can do so on their own.

How to express the bladder

Two to three times a day, take your pet to their normal bathroom spot and give them a chance to urinate on their own. If they cannot, you will need to express their bladder. This can be difficult. It's okay to ask for help from your veterinarian while you are learning. Be patient with yourself and your pet, and you will get the hang of this eventually.

Step 1: Find the bladder

Place one hand on either side of their belly. Slowly but firmly, push your hands together. It's important to go slowly and use a flat hand- not pointy fingers!

Start just behind their ribs and slowly slide your hands up, down, back and forth until you feel your pet's bladder. A full bladder in a cat will be the size of an orange, a dachshund's will be the size of a grapefruit, and a golden retriever's will be the size of a soccer ball. The bladder will feel like a water balloon.

Step 2: Express the bladder

Once you have found the bladder, slowly but firmly press on the bladder until you see urine expelled. Continue pressing until you feel the bladder become flat. It may slip out of your hands as it empties- try to find it again by following the instructions in step 1. When you find it, press again. Get as much urine out as possible.

Step 3: Evaluate the urine



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Each time your pet urinates, evaluate the urine for abnormal colors and smells. If your pet is urinating in the grass, you may blot the spot with a white piece of paper or paper towel to evaluate the color. If you have any concerns, contact your veterinarian. Urinary tract infections are very common in pets who have had spinal injuries.

When to stop expressing your pet's bladder

Once your pet can reliably urinate a normal amount on their own twice a day, you can stop expressing their bladder.

When to seek urgent care

If your pet has not urinated AND you have not been able to successfully express the bladder in over 24 hours, please seek urgent veterinary care. If your pet seems uncomfortable or is leaking small amounts of urine consistently- try to express the bladder. If you cannot, seek urgent veterinary care.

