

For Your Information

Courtesy Of:

Cotati Large Animal Hospital

8079 Gravenstein Hwy, Cotati, CA 94931

(707) 795-4356 (707) 578-4760

Gene Harlan, DVM Calvin Dotti, DVM Andrew Wirz, DVM Sally Venable, DVM

www.cotatilargeanimal.com

Urinary Calculi and Urinary Tract Obstruction in Pet Goats

The formation of mineral deposits or urinary calculi in the bladder can lead to life threatening urinary tract obstructions in castrated male goats (wethers). There are some steps you can take to prevent this condition from developing in your goat.

Prevention:

In male goats the urethra, which carries urine from the bladder through the penis, continues to increase in diameter until the goat is 6 months old. Early castration of goat kids can stop this development, leading to a narrower tube which is more easily clogged by mineral deposits. Therefore, we recommend delaying castration of your pet goat until he is at least 3 months old. Waiting until your goat is 6 months old may not be advisable as he may reach puberty and begin to show secondary sexual characteristics such as a "buck scent".

Dietary factors play a big role in the formation of urinary calculi. In particular, feeding grain or alfalfa greatly increases the risk of developing calculi. This is because these feeds have an improper calcium: phosphorous ratio and tend to increase urine pH to a level which favors stone formation. Inadequate access to clean water leads to more concentrated urine and also makes the formation of calculi more likely.

The best diet for pet goats is pasture or grass hay. This diet helps maintain a healthy urine pH, limits the level of certain minerals in the urine which contribute to bladder stone formation, and also helps prevent obesity. Providing a loose salt and mineral mix specific for goats as well as providing a clean source of water helps naturally keep the urinary tract flushed out. Filling a spray bottle with water and adding 1-2 tablespoons of table salt is excellent for spraying on the hay prior to feeding to encourage water intake.

Symptoms of Urinary Calculi or Urinary Tract Obstruction

- Straining to urinate
- Appears to be constipated
- Abdominal discomfort i.e. stretching, kicking, looking at the side
- Rapid tail swishing
- Poor appetite
- Blood in the urine or dripping urine
- Crystals on the hairs around the prepuce
- Bloated abdomen
- Death

Partial urethral obstruction can lead to permanent scarring of the delicate lining of the urethra and complete urethral obstruction can quickly lead to kidney damage or rupture of the bladder or urethra. Call your veterinarian immediately if you suspect that your goat is having difficulty urinating.