

Cat or Dog Peeing Blood

Seeing blood in your pet's urine can be scary, and it is important to pursue work-up as the causes of blood in the urine can range from mild/easily treatable to severe and life-threatening.

What is Hematuria?

The medical term for a cat or dog peeing blood is hematuria. So what is hematuria? It can range from a pink-hue to the urine, bloody clots passed in the urine or frank red blood. Sometimes hematuria can be microscopic (present even if the urine looks normal to the naked eye). It is also important to be aware that not all red urine is blood. Some conditions can cause pigmenturia, where the urine looks red or brown for reasons unrelated to bleeding.



Hematuria can be better characterized using clues from patient history and diagnostics to determine where the blood is originating (ex: the upper urinary tract including the kidneys, the lower urinary tract such as the bladder and urethra, or the reproductive tract such as the vagina, uterus or prostate). Clotting disorders could also lead to urinary bleeding. Please refer to the table below for a list of potential causes of a cat or dog peeing blood and how the clinical signs may differ.

Hematuria Causes

Cause	What It Means	Clinical Signs
Urinary Tract Infection (UTI), uncomplicated	Bacterial infection of the bladder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloody or cloudy urine • Frequent urination • Straining or discomfort • House accidents • Strong urine odor
Bladder or Kidney Stones	Mineral deposits that irritate the urinary tract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood in urine • Frequent attempts to urinate • Straining • Abdominal pain • Possible urinary blockage

Hematuria Causes Cont.

Cause	What It Means	Clinical Signs
Inflammatory Cystitis (Noninfectious)	Bladder inflammation without infection; stress-related in many cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink or red urine • Frequent small urinations • Straining • Urinating outside litter box (cats)
Prostate Disease (dogs)	Inflammation/infection of the prostate (prostatitis) or prostatic mass/tumor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood drops or blood in urine • Straining to urinate/defecate • Frequent urination
Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH)	Hormone-driven enlargement of the prostate in intact male dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood in urine or blood droplets after urination • Straining to urinate or defecate • Ribbonshaped stools • Normal appetite and energy in many cases
Tumors or Polyps	Abnormal growths in bladder, kidneys, or urethra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent or worsening blood in urine • Straining • Recurring UTIs • Weight loss or decreased appetite
Clotting Disorders	Body cannot form clots normally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark red urine • Bruising • Nosebleeds • Pale gums • Weakness
Kidney Disease	Inflammation, complicated urinary tract infection/pyelonephritis, or damage to kidneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood in urine • Increased thirst/urination • Vomiting or weight loss • Decreased appetite
Idiopathic Renal Hematuria	Bleeding from one or both kidneys with no identifiable cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright red urine, may come and go • Often no straining or pain • Pet otherwise acts normal unless anemia develops
Myoglobinuria (Muscle Pigment. LookAlike)	Muscle breakdown releases pigment into urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very dark brown/red urine • Muscle pain or stiffness • Weakness or collapse
Hemoglobinuria (RBC Breakdown, LookAlike)	Hemoglobin (pigment) enters urine when red blood cells rupture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red/brown urine • Pale gums • Rapid breathing • Weakness • Yellowing of eyes/skin

It is important to seek veterinary attention if you notice your cat or dog peeing blood. Please be certain to provide a complete history of your pet's symptoms as they can help guide diagnostic testing with particular attention to any change in appetite, thirst/urination habits and behaviors. Your vet will start with a physical examination to screen for signs of systemic illness (ex: fever, evidence of bleeding elsewhere, etc.), urine testing to look for signs of infection, microscopic abnormalities and confirm hematuria (vs. look-alike pigmenturia), and blood work (to help check kidney function, red blood cell counts, clotting ability, and signs of systemic infection/inflammation). Additional testing may include urine culture (if infection is suspected, this identifies the exact bacteria and the most effective antibiotic) and imaging such as x-rays (to screen for stones) or ultrasound (visualizes bladder wall and kidneys along with other important abdominal organs).

If you notice your dog or cat peeing blood, the severity of the case can vary. While some cases of hematuria are more straightforward (ex: bacterial urinary tract infection), others can be more complicated. In complex cases, additional testing such as specific coagulation tests, cystoscopy (using a camera to assess the lining of the urinary bladder and urethra) and even biopsies may be indicated. Your veterinarian will review findings as they are available and help guide diagnostic and therapeutic recommendations.