

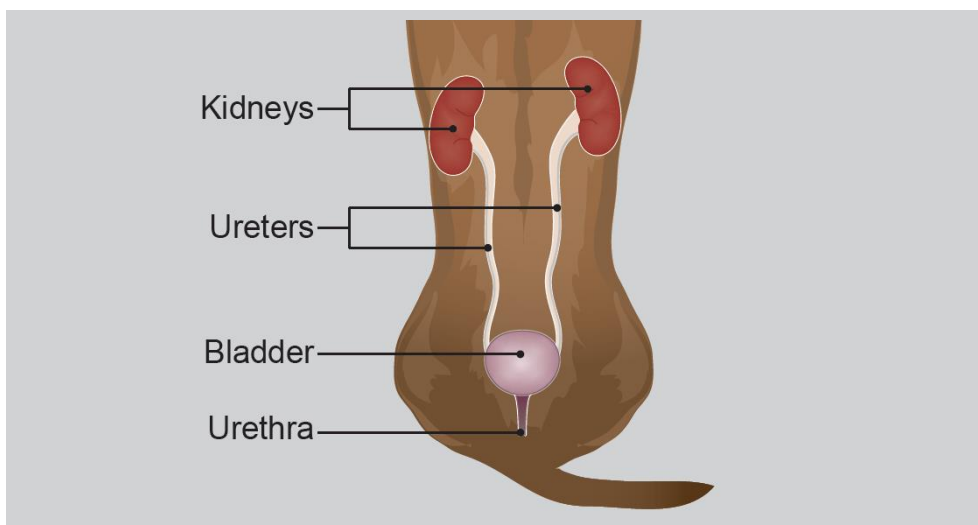
## Urinary Incontinence in Dogs

### Overview

- Does your dog leak urine? Have you noticed wet patches on their bedding or fur?
- Urinary incontinence isn't normal and shouldn't be ignored, even in an older dog.
- Urinary incontinence can be caused by many different conditions, many of which are curable.
- Contact your vet for an appointment if you have noticed your dog becoming incontinent.

### Urinary incontinence explained

Urinary incontinence is not normal and shouldn't be ignored, even in an older dog. There are many different causes, ranging from congenital problems (something they are born with), to urine infections and spinal problems. Anything that affects the urinary tract (see image below), including the muscles and nerves that control it,



*Anything that affects the urinary tract (including muscles and nerves) can cause incontinence.*

can lead to incontinence. If your dog has started to leak urine, try not to worry, there are treatments available for many different types of incontinence.

## When to contact your vet

Book an appointment with your vet as soon as you notice your dog leaking urine. It may help if you can collect a urine sample from your dog and take it along. If this isn't possible, your vet will try to collect one for you. **Watch our video, 'How to: collect a urine sample from your dog'.**



## Causes

There are many different things that can cause urinary incontinence in dogs. Some are more common in young dogs, male dogs, female dogs and some can affect any age dog, at any time. For this reason, we have split the common causes into age and gender categories.

### Adult female

- **USMI.** USMI is a common cause of incontinence in adult, female dogs, especially large breeds. USMI is when the valve

that holds urine inside the bladder becomes weak and leaky. USMI is most common in older, females but can also affect young dogs (called 'congenital USMI').

### Adult male

- **Prostate problems.** Prostate problems only affect male dogs (because female dogs don't have a prostate gland). The urethra (tube that carries urine out of the body) passes through the prostate, so any problems with it can cause incontinence.
- **Perineal hernia.** A perineal hernia, which is more common in males than females, is a rupture near the anus (bottom). Sometimes a perineal hernia can cause the bladder to move out of position, which causes incontinence.

### Young dogs

- **Ectopic ureter.** An ectopic ureter is when the tube that takes urine into the bladder connects to the wrong place and causes incontinence. It's a problem a dog is born with, so is most commonly diagnosed early in life. However, it is also sometimes diagnosed in dogs that have coped with condition for a long time and not shown symptoms until later in life.
- **Other Congenital Problems.** Ectopic ureter (above) is the most common congenital problem vets see in young dogs. There are several other possible abnormalities, but they are all quite rare.

### Any age

- **Spinal problems.** Any problems with nerves in the spine that control the bladder can cause incontinence e.g. conditions such as spinal disc disease or degenerative myelopathy .
- **Urine infection.** A urine infection can cause temporary incontinence due to swelling and pain.
- **Urine blockage.** Anything that blocks the passage of urine for a long time e.g. bladder stones, can damage the bladder muscles and cause incontinence.

- **Injury to the urinary tract.** Injuries can leave scarring which cause incontinence.
- **Tumours in the urinary tract.** Tumours in the urinary tract are rare, but can cause incontinence.

## Other symptoms to look out for

Keep an eye out for any other symptoms that could give your vet clues about the cause of your dog's incontinence:

- Blood in urine
- Pain when peeing
- Peeing more frequently than usual
- Licking back end more than usual
- Limping or stiffness in the back legs or pain in lower spine
- Drinking more than usual
- Changes in appetite

## Treatment

Treatment for your dog's urinary incontinence will depend on the cause. Follow the links above for more information on the specific causes of incontinence in dogs.

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