



Stanhope Park Veterinary Hospital

Bladder Stones (Uroliths) in Small Mammals

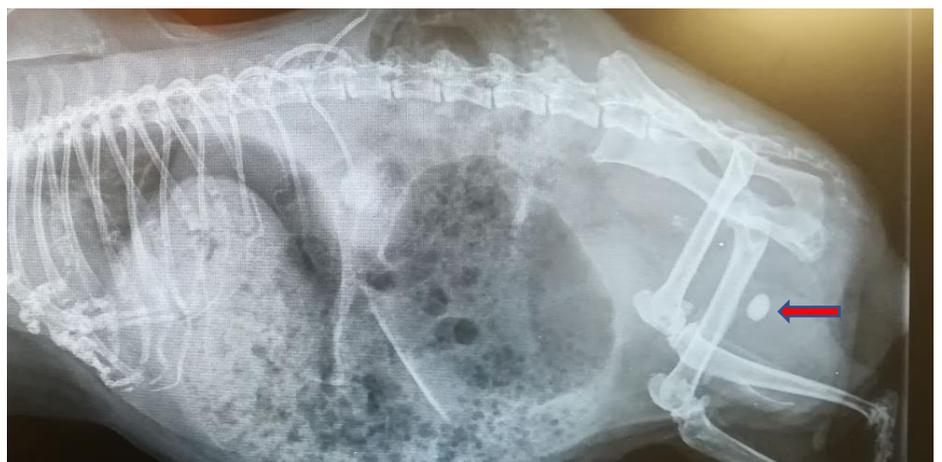
What are bladder stones?

Bladder stones, also known as uroliths, are formed from calcium salts because of poor nutrition, urinary tract infections or obesity. They are commonly seen in guinea pigs and cause life-threatening urinary obstruction. This is when urine is unable from being expelled from the body, resulting in pain and discomfort. The following clinical signs may be noted at home.

- Increased vocalising due to abdominal palpation
- Blood in the urine
- Straining to urinate
- Inappetence and secondary gut stasis
- Lethargy
- Urine staining

How are they diagnosed?

Your veterinarian will perform a full clinical examination and may wish to perform an x-ray to help identify the stone.



How are they treated?

A surgical procedure known as a cystotomy will be required to remove the stones from the bladder. This is performed under a general anaesthetic and involves opening the bladder to remove the stone.

Guinea pigs with urinary stones are often kept in hospital overnight for pain relief, fluid therapy and monitoring faecal output following surgery.

How can I prevent them in future?

Increase water intake: ensure clean water is always available and provided for, soak down hay, ensure multiple water sources are available. Increased water intake helps to dilute urine and prevents stone formation.

Prevent obesity: Obesity is a risk factor for the development of urinary stones. Should your pet guinea be overweight a diet will be advised to help them return to a normal body condition score.

Oxbows Natural Science Urinary Support Supplements may be offered.

Diets:

- Eliminate any alfalfa hay from the diet. Instead offer grass or hays without alfalfa.
- Eliminate packaged treats as these are often not beneficial to the development of stones.
- Calcium carbonate stones are the most common type found in guinea pigs. Increase fresh greens by 15-20% slowly. Focus on low calcium greens with smaller amounts of veg and fruit. Leafy greens are the preferred dietary option. Foods may include:
 - Sweet potato
 - Green Beans
 - Squash
 - Peas
 - Asparagus
 - Watercress
 - Turnip greens
 - Kale
 - Carrot tops
 - Spring greens
 - Dandelion Greens
 - Basil
 - Watercress
 - Fennel leafy tops
- If the stone was calcium oxalate reducing dietary oxalate sources can be beneficial. Oxalate is high in spinach, parsley, celery, strawberries.

If you are concerned about your pet guinea pig showing any of these signs please contact our cat and exotics duke street practice on 01325 620968.