Cases From Our Clinic:
The Cat Who Lost a Lot of Weight

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Templeton was a great big orange tabby who was so friendly that everyone just loved him. Bonnie got him as a 7-week old kitten and he slowly took over the house from the resident Siamese female. Other pets were slowly added, and although he had a problem with the dogs, he still lived a happy feline life.

Templeton's owner took good care of him, but sometimes her hectic lifestyle did not allow her as much time to observe her animals as she would have liked.

When she cleaned the litter boxes she realized that there seemed to be more clumps than usual, but she did not think much of it since both cats were over 10 years old and it did not seem excessive.

About six months after she noticed this, Templeton, who had always been a big cat, looked like he was losing weight. This, Bonnie felt, was not a bad thing since the cat tended to be over his ideal weight anyway. She became concerned when the weight loss became excessive, and she brought him in to us for some blood tests. We examined this sweet tabby and noticed upon palpation of his abdomen that one of his kidneys felt as if it were smaller than the other.

We took x-rays and blood tests and found that indeed one of his kidneys was quite a bit smaller than the other and his Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) and Creatinine levels were elevated, hallmarks for loss of kidney function. Templeton was also severely dehydrated, so we gave him intravenous fluids (in the vein) to take care of that. The kidneys rely on the body to provide enough fluid so that they can do their filtering job. If the kidneys are not functioning, toxins that would normally be filtered out are able to poison the body. This

Functions of the Kidneys

The kidneys are essentially the filters of the body system and are a major part of the urinary system. The urinary system includes the kidneys, the ureters (the tubes from the kidneys to

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makes the cat not want to eat. (See sidebar for the function of the kidneys.)

Bonnie, who had experience with animal nursing, opted to treat Templeton at home by administering the fluids that would keep him hydrated, feeding him a special diet that would be easier on his kidneys, and giving appropriate medications we prescribed. Bonnie hand fed him when he didn't want to eat, and he lived happily for about four months.

Eventually the 10-year-old cat's kidneys gave out and despite Bonnie's every effort, Templeton was not leading a happy cat's life. The stress from the treatments were taking their toll and Bonnie was faced with the most difficult decision a pet owner must ever make. Bonnie looked at all the facts: Templeton's prognosis, his attitude, his quality of life. She talked with us and decided that Templeton would likely get worse. Bonnie decided to let her beloved cat go. She had him euthanized, though he forever remains in her heart and thoughts.

tubes from the kidneys to the urinary bladder), the urinary bladder, and the urethra (the tube from the urinary bladder to the outside).

Functions of the Urinary System

- Removal of waste products from the blood and then from the body
- Regulation of the volume of body fluid
- Maintenance of pH balance, sodium, and potassium levels in the body

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