



FELINE AORTIC THROMBOEMBOLISM (FATE)

A Sudden and Life-Threatening Emergency

Feline Aortic Thromboembolism (FATE), sometimes called a "saddle thrombus", occurs when a blood clot blocks blood flow to the back legs. It is a painful emergency requiring immediate veterinary attention.



WHAT IS FATE?

FATE occurs when a blood clot forms in the heart and travels through the bloodstream.

The clot commonly becomes lodged where the aorta divides to supply the hind limbs, cutting off blood flow.

This causes:

- 💧 Severe pain
- 💧 Paralysis or weakness
- 💧 Loss of circulation
- 💧 Tissue damage



DID YOU KNOW?

Many cats with FATE have underlying heart disease that may not have been previously diagnosed.

For some cats, a thromboembolism is the first sign that heart disease is present.



1 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Signs often appear suddenly:

- ✓ Sudden collapse
- ✓ Crying or vocalising in pain
- ✓ Dragging one or both back legs
- ✓ Inability to stand
- ✓ Cold back paws
- ✓ Weak or absent pulses in the hind limbs
- ✓ Rapid breathing
- ✓ Distress or anxiety



FATE is often mistaken for injury or trauma.

2 WHY IS IT AN EMERGENCY?

Without blood supply, muscles and nerves rapidly become damaged.

Complications may include:

- ✓ Severe pain
- ✓ Permanent nerve damage
- ✓ Heart failure
- ✓ Kidney injury
- ✓ Death



Immediate veterinary assessment is essential.

3 WHAT CAUSES FATE?

Most cases are linked to:

- ✓ Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM)
- ✓ Other forms of heart disease
- ✓ Enlarged heart chambers
- ✓ Abnormal blood clot formation

Some cats show no signs of heart disease before the event occurs.



4 WHICH CATS ARE AT RISK?

Higher-risk cats include:

- ✓ Middle-aged and older cats
- ✓ Male cats
- ✓ Cats with diagnosed heart disease
- ✓ Maine Coons
- ✓ Ragdolls
- ✓ British Shorthairs

However, FATE can occur in any breed.



5 HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian may perform:

- ✓ Physical examination
- ✓ Blood pressure assessment
- ✓ Blood tests
- ✓ Chest radiographs
- ✓ Echocardiogram (heart ultrasound)
- ✓ ECG



6 WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

Treatment may include:

- ✓ Pain relief
- ✓ Hospitalisation
- ✓ Supportive care
- ✓ Heart medications

- ⚠ Unfortunately, the prognosis for many cats with FATE is poor.
- ⚠ Despite treatment, recurrence is common and many affected cats do not survive long-term.
- ⚠ In many cases, euthanasia is the most humane option to prevent ongoing pain and suffering.



7 CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

While not all cases can be prevented:

- ✓ Regular veterinary health checks
- ✓ Early diagnosis of heart disease
- ✓ Cardiac screening in at-risk breeds
- ✓ Following prescribed cardiac medications may help reduce risk.



ADDITIONAL TIPS



Sudden hind limb paralysis is always an emergency.



Cats with heart disease require regular monitoring.



Never wait to see if your cat improves overnight.



EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

If your cat suddenly cannot use its back legs, appears painful, or is dragging its hind limbs, seek veterinary attention immediately.

