

## Curing Dogs' Recurring Urinary-Tract Infections

**Pinpointing the cause for a dog's infections is the key to stopping them for good.**

*By Jon Geller, DVM*

**Q.** My 7-year-old Basset Hound keeps getting urinary-tract infections. This is the fifth time. I give her the drugs the vet tells me to, but she just gets the infection again. Should the vet be running more tests to find out why this is happening?

**A.** Urinary-tract infections are fairly common in female dogs, but they shouldn't be recurring the way your dog's infections appear to be. Here are the reasons the urinary-tract infections may be recurring, and the steps that should be taken to correct the problem: Resistant bacteria. A sterile urine sample should be collected, and submitted to a microbiology lab to see which organisms are growing, and which antibiotics will be effective against the bacteria.

Antibiotics not being given long enough. Sometimes, antibiotics need to be given for three weeks or longer to fully clear the infection. When antibiotics are discontinued too soon, any remaining resistant organisms will reproduce and create a larger colony of equally resistant bacteria.

An anatomical problem that causes repeated infections. Sometimes, bad anatomy can create problems, such as urine pooling or fecal contamination, which lead to repeated urinary-tract infections. An exam, possibly including vaginoscopy (using a scope to examine the vaginal vault), can diagnose an anatomical problem. Sometimes, corrective surgery is required.

A problem with your dog's immune system. Certain hormonal diseases, such as hypothyroidism or Cushing's disease, can suppress the immune system, which can lead to repeated infections, sometimes including the urinary tract or skin.

Please discuss these possibilities with your veterinarian, and start working your way down the list. This is a problem that can be solved.