



What is an Arterial Thromboembolism (ATE)?

An ATE is a large blood clot that lodges itself in an artery and cuts off blood supply to everything that artery would normally bring blood to.

How is a saddle thrombus different?

A saddle thrombus is an ATE that has formed and lodged itself in the distal aorta, cutting off blood supply to both back legs.

When do we see this condition?

Most often this condition is seen in cats where they react painfully and cannot use their back legs. It more rarely affects dogs but can affect them with more variable signs (they are not always paralyzed).

What causes this condition?

In cats this condition is most often caused by underlying heart disease or cancer. When this condition occurs, we will often recommend screening for these diseases to determine the underlying cause.

Is this condition painful?

Yes. This condition is particularly painful for cats in the initial day or two after they lose function of their legs. It is strongly recommended that you bring your cat to the hospital immediately if they stop using their back legs to discuss this condition, as well as doctors to provide pain medications.

Will my cat be able to walk again?

Sadly, in most cases the ability to walk again is not achieved, and most veterinarians will recommend euthanasia. No studies have been successful in treating this condition and possible treatments are associated with fatal complications. Additionally, most cats with this condition have severe underlying diseases, such as congestive heart failure or cancer. This means that their prognosis regardless of the ATE is likely poor.

If your cat suddenly stops using their back legs please bring them in to a veterinarian immediately for evaluation and immediate pain relief. Do not give them over the counter pain medications as many of these are toxic to cats.