

PREVENT LITTER BOX PROBLEMS!

Cats are almost neurotic about their need to feel safe and secure while they are eliminating. They live in a sensory world entirely separate from ours. They hear things we can't hear, they smell things we can't smell, and they are far more sensitive to vibration than we are. The slightest disturbance can convince kitty that his bathroom is a dangerous place--a furnace kicking in, clothes clanking in the dryer or a thunderstorm rattling the house. A confident, secure, & relaxed cat doesn't relieve anxiety and stress by urine or fecal marking. If such a thing should start, there is always an easy fix...you just need to seek professional help immediately BEFORE it gets to the point you want the cat euthanized. Your first step is to seek a vet since tests may reveal a painful medical condition causing the problem. If medical tests prove the cat is fine, seek professional behavior help immediately!



SPAY/NEUTER prior to 6mo of age! Intact cats of both sexes frequently use urine and feces to mark their territory. Altering will correct the problem in approximately 90% of these cats.

AMT OF BOXES The rule of thumb is: one per cat in the household, plus one! Extra boxes are a must since some cats like to defecate in one and urinate in another. Some cats prefer their own box too. Different areas for the litter boxes can prevent location-avoidance problems.

SCOOPING must be done DAILY! The single most common reason for a cat's refusal to use a litterbox is because the box is dirty, which we cannot blame them for! Would you want to use a toilet that was flushed only twice a week? A non-clumping litter is much cheaper than the scoopable, but requires the box to be emptied and washed every other day since removing urine is impossible. Scoopable litters range drastically in quality since cheaper brands break-up easier when scooped, leaving particles of waste behind. This results in dumping the box as frequently as the non-clumping litter, since urine smells to cats much more than humans. Scoopable litter that is 'hard-clumping' will cost more, but scoops easily without mess and usually only requires dumping/washing once a month. Use hot water and mild dish soap to wash a box since harsh chemicals will leave a lingering odor. Whichever litter you choose, be sure there is a minimum of 3" of litter in at all times since digging and covering is very important to cats, especially finicky ones!

CHOOSING LITTER that appeals to the cat is important. Most cats prefer the softer, sand-like texture

of scoopable litter, usually the finer the better. NEVER use scented litter. Humans like the perfumed scent, but unless you use the box yourself, buy a brand that won't repel your cat!. Cats don't like changes but they do like choices. Place the new litter or a new box next to the old one. If it becomes evident that it has become his clear favorite, then the old litter or box be safely eliminated. Liners are irritating to many cats, please avoid!

COVERED BOXES seem to trap the smell inside, similar to an outhouse. If you think the box smells, imagine what your cat thinks with a nose that smells 10 times better than ours! Some cats do feel more secure in covered boxes, while others feel they have no way to escape if startled, so it's best to offer a variety. We recommend huge boxes, larger than 16" x 22" so they have enough room to turn around...which is extremely important with large cats! The best litter boxes are usually sold in hardware stores as "all-purpose tubs."

LOCATION is extremely important! Most people want the boxes out of sight, usually in a basement, which creates many problems. If a young child has a choice of going to the bathroom alone in the basement or his pants...he's not going to pick the basement, no matter what the bribe is! Cats are the same, since loud noises scare them, noises you may not notice. Some cats are finicky if near air fresheners, while some may feel the box is just too far away. To avoid problems, be sure you have a box on each level of the home, in a quiet place, away from dogs, children, strangers, and heavily traveled areas. It needs to be easily accessible to the cat and having boxes at opposite ends of the house is best. Most important, be sure none of the boxes are near an appliance, like a washer/dryer, furnace, pump, or anything else that MAY at some point turn on while the cat is using the box. All it takes is once for the cat to be scared out of the box from a loud noise or sudden vibration & they may associate that place as scary, just as young children would. Placing their food and water dishes near the box is a bad idea. Just as you wouldn't want to eat in the restroom, they do not either! If the box is in a room that is very dark at night, a small night light will be helpful. Once you've chosen the placement of the boxes, and unless there is a problem, do not move them! Cats are creatures of habit and some may 'rebel' against the new location.



PROBLEMS CAN START AT ANY TIME, SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY!

