



Feline Inappropriate Elimination

Urinating or Defecating
outside of the Litter Box

How to make your litter box the best place for your cat to go and how to make all other locations seem undesirable

First, the cat should be thoroughly examined by your Veterinarian and stool and urine samples should be run to make sure there are no medical problems. Blood work may also be necessary. Once we have ruled out medical conditions, then we can start behavioral modifications.

The Golden Rule for litter box use is to have one more litter box than the number of cats you own. You can have litter boxes side-by-side, but ideally they should be in more than one location. Litter boxes should be scooped 2 to 3 times a day and cleaned completely at least once a week. Avoid the use of harsh, overly fragrant, cleaning solutions.

In general, cats prefer unscented scoopable clay a litter. Most cats also prefer an uncovered litter box. The litter boxes should be placed in areas of easy access for the cat and in areas that are not unpleasant or anxiety-evoking. It is important to make sure that each cat in the household has the same easy access to the litter boxes. If your cat is not using the litter box, you should add additional boxes, try different locations, and try different litter types while continuing to use your original boxes and original litter. Keep track of which location and litter your cat prefers. In general you should avoid scented litter and pine litter; most cats prefer scoopable or plain clay litter.

Areas where the cat has already inappropriately urinated or defecated need to be cleaned thoroughly to remove the odor. Use enzymatic odor eliminating cleaning solutions (Simple Solution, Nature's Miracle) available at most pet stores. Follow the instructions to thoroughly clean the areas. Do not use soaps or detergents as they don't remove the odor and they make the enzymatic cleaners less effective. Pheromone sprays such as Feliway can be sprayed around, not on, the areas you want the cat to avoid.

It is important to make previously soiled areas seem undesirable. Sometimes placing food bowls, bedding, play toys, or a scratching post, on and near the previously soiled area will discourage the cat. Other ways to alter the desirability of previously soiled areas is to use citrus products, potpourri, Irish Spring soap bars, double stick tape, or upside down vinyl carpet runner. Sometimes

the whole area needs to be covered with a plastic tarp or tinfoil. It may also be necessary to close off frequently soiled rooms and to prevent access to areas and objects likely to be soiled. This means keeping clothing and laundry off the floor, keeping beds made, keeping shoes in closets, keeping bathmats and towels off the bathroom floor, and keeping doors closed.

Once your cat is using the litter box consistently it is important *not* to make any quick changes in the setup. It will be necessary to prevent access to areas that you want the cat to avoid for at least a month or two, maybe longer. If the litter box needs to be moved, do this very slowly, moving it an inch or so at a time until it is in a location that suits the needs of your cat as well as your needs. Obtaining acceptable litter behavior will take time. Do not hesitate to call your veterinarian if you are still having problems as the longer the problems have gone on for, the longer they take to correct. It is hard to get rid of bad habits so it is best to address them right away. If you have any further questions or concerns please call.

