



Companion Animal Behavioural Services
Creating Contentment From Knowledge And Kindness

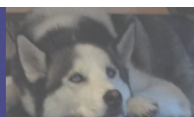
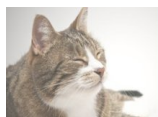
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INAPPROPRIATE ELIMINATION IN CATS



Cats are usually fastidious and, even if kept indoors, will quickly get used to using a litter tray. If your cat suddenly eliminates outside of the box, on a bed or other inappropriate place, it is often a sign that something is wrong. Marking by spraying urine is a different problem - the amount of urine and location will help to determine the difference. Urine is sprayed by cats as a marker when standing upright and is often deposited on entrances and exits, curtains, electrical equipment and shopping or rubbish bags. Urination takes place when a cat is squatting and produces a bigger volume, often on a bed, clothing or furnishings.

Accidents can happen if a cat is frightened or gets shut in, but if faeces and/or urine are found in unusual - and unwanted - places, then it should be investigated.



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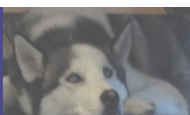
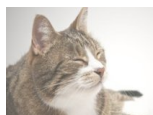
It is important not to punish the cat or try to use redirection by placing aversive objects where he is eliminating as it will only drive him to use another inappropriate area and it will not solve the problem. Soiled areas should be cleaned using a commercially produced enzymatic cleaner or a 10% solution of biological or enzymatic washing powder followed by a cold water rinse and thorough drying. This should prevent the cat from repeating the behaviour in the same area.

Common Causes

Check with your vet to rule out a clinical cause. Common reasons include kidney and thyroid disorders, diabetes and bladder problems. It may help to monitor your cat's drinking and inform the vet if it seems to be more than usual.

If your cat is refusing to use a litter tray it may be because:

- Your cat hasn't been trained
- The type of litter is not appropriate
- It is not cleaned frequently enough
- The litter or cleaner has a strong smell (scented litters and cleaners included)
- It is too hard for the cat to use (because of pain, illness or ageing)
- It is difficult or off-putting to access (unsuitable location or box type)
- It has negative associations
- It has been moved.



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make sure that litter trays are placed in a quiet area where your cat will not be overlooked or disturbed. You may need to purchase a covered “igloo-type” box. Separate resources (water food, litter trays, toys and scratching posts) should be provided for each cat in multi-cat households. Experiment with not using litter tray liners as some cats do not like them.

Stress is a common cause of unwanted behaviours in cats. This can include strangers and children in the house, a new cat in the area or changes to the home such as moving house. Outdoor cats may start eliminating indoors because something has frightened them in their usual place outdoors.

It is important to realise that cats will not eliminate inappropriately in order to “punish” their owners. It may seem personal if it is your bed or clothing that is constantly being soiled, but it is more likely that it is a place where your cat feels safe and a surface that feels appropriate.

Even if a clinical cause has been found, you may need behavioural modification support to retrain your cat if he has developed a habit of using an inappropriate spot.

**Contact Companion Animal Behavioural Services at
info@dogsnet.org for more help**

