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Litter Training

Every cat can learn how to use a litterbox. Digging and scooping is a natural behavior for cats, so most cats learn this behavior quite easily. Kittens can (and should) learn to use the litterbox early.

Too often, cats lose their homes, their families, and even their lives, because of misunderstandings about the cat's needs and the litterbox. House soiling is the most common behavioral problem exhibited by cats- affecting one in ten housecats. The problem is much easier to prevent than to cure, and often occurs because the cat sees the litterbox as dirty or unpleasant or uncomfortable.

Suggestions for making the litterbox appealing to your cat include the following:

- Scoop the litterbox daily and keep ample quantity of fresh litter in the box.
- Completely change the litter ever 1 – 2 weeks. Wash the box out with soap and water. Never use ammonia or other strong smelling products that may be aversive to your cat.
- Have one (or more) litter boxes than the number of cats. (i.e A house with 2 cats should have 3 litter boxes)
- Remember that kittens and older, debilitated cats cannot be expected to climb a flight of stairs to get to their box.
- Be sure litterboxes are easily accessible to all cats, and that they are in quiet areas, away from household traffic and loud appliances and sounds. Give your cat as much privacy as possible.
- Many cats dislike the deodorizers in commercial litters. They often shun the box right from the start, or are repelled after the first use of the box (when the deodorizer is released). They may also do one or the other waste function in the box, and deposit the other one nearby. For this reason, we recommend unscented cat litter.

Unfortunately, many owners mistakenly assume that inappropriate urination is a behavior problem. Cats are VERY prone to cystitis and other renal and metabolic disorders that may be manifested by urination outside of the box. An underlying medical problem may be the cause of pain and discomfort, exhibited by urinating outside the box. Always give your cat the benefit of the doubt first. Make an appointment with the hospital to check for medical problems first.