



# Feline Forum

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## Territorial marking behavior

While some cats will take an active part in the family activities, by nature they are solitary creatures with their own territory that they mark to claim as theirs.

There are several ways a cat marks his or her territory. Spraying urine is one way a cat marks a territory. While the frequency increases with hormonal changes during the breeding season, spraying can also occur in neutered cats of either sex. Most often, a neutered cat's spraying is associated with conditions of overcrowding and/or aggressive behavior towards other cats.

Now most of us think that when a cat rubs its cheek on our legs that he or she is telling us

we're loved. That may be true, but in reality there's more than affection going on. Bunting — (rubbing the side of the head against an object or person) may also be a form of feline olfactory communication because the glandular secretions from the cats' face are deposited on the object being rubbed. When a cat twines itself around the leg of a chair or a person, it is also transferring odors, in this case from tail glands.

So being bunted by your cat is a good thing. It's his or her way of telling others to whom you belong.

## Pilling your cat

Giving your cat a pill is a challenge that many of us don't want to take. At best, we may be able to get our kitty to take a tiny pill by hiding it in a tasty treat. But often, we find ourselves chasing him or her around the house, coaxing and cajoling, and never getting that pill down.

Sometimes veterinarians give their clients a so-called "pill gun" to use, and other times there may

be a liquid medication that can be mixed with food. But the key to successfully getting your cat to take a pill is to work quickly to get the medication back in the back of the throat. Don't give him or her a chance to think about what's going on because they can make it extremely difficult.

If you're unsuccessful in getting your cat to take the pill, take a break and try again. With a demonstration from your veterinarian and a lot of practice you'll get to a point where pilling your cat is not the most difficult thing you have to do.

## Holiday hazards



If you think your sweet kitty doesn't get excited during the holidays, think again. He or she will find much delight in the

goings on. So, it's important to take extra precautions to ensure you cat's well being.

Remember that chocolate and alcohol are toxic to animals, and if ingested they can kill an animal. Some flowers and plants are toxic too, including



the Japanese yew, mountain laurel, lily of the valley, and philodendron. And festive wrappings

like cellophane, ribbons, balloons, and decorations will tempt your cat with all their playful opportunities.

Just remember to keep an eye on your kitty, buy him or her an extra catnip-filled toy, and everyone will safely and happily enjoy the festivities.



The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 2000.



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