



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

Solving House Soiling Problems

If your cat does not use a litter box consistently, you are not alone. Sixty-four percent of feline misbehavior cases seen at Cornell University's Animal Behavior Clinic during an eight year period were house soiling problems.

Under normal circumstances the cat is fastidiously clean in its elimination behavior. However, certain diseases, stresses and environmental changes can alter a cat's elimination behavior.

Causes

Feline urologic syndrome (FUS) accounts for a significant number of house soiling cases. FUS is a term used to describe a wide-range of urinary tract problems such as cystitis, urethritis and urethral blockage. Signs associated with FUS include inappropriate urination, bloody urine and straining to urinate.

Territorial marking by spraying urine is common for intact male and female cats. The frequency increases with hormonal changes during the breeding season. However, neutered or spayed cats may spray urine when living in overcrowded conditions.

Environmental changes such as moving to a new home, change in the owner's schedule or the introduction of a new household pet can cause sufficient stress to initiate problems.

Treatment

- Cleanliness and accessibility of the litter box are essential to reestablish consistent use of the litter box. Soiled litter should be removed daily and replaced with fresh litter.
- Provide at least one litter box per cat in multi-cat households.
- Castrating tomcats or spaying queens that spray urine may reduce their natural inclination to mark their territory.
- Some cats may require retraining to the litter box. One method is to place the litter box over a favorite elimination site and slowly move it to a more desirable location.

- If you observe signs of FUS, immediately schedule an appointment with a veterinarian for treatment.

Treating Abscesses

Abscesses are relatively common in cats. Territorial fights between cats, playful bouts, and even mating can cause puncture wounds that can develop into abscesses.

Early detection is the key to treatment. With some cases, just keeping the wound site cleaned and drained by applying hot compresses on the wound two to three times a day for 15 to 20 minutes for several days is sufficient treatment. If the abscess is not draining and the cat has a fever, is lethargic and not eating, then you should take the cat to your veterinarian for treatment.

Giardia Can Cause Chronic Diarrhea

Chronic, intermittent diarrhea can be caused by various bacteria, viruses, food sensitivities, and dietary imbalances. But when diagnostic procedures for these causes or treatments are ineffective, then *Giardia* may be the causative agent.

Giardia is a protozoa (one-celled organism) that parasitizes the small intestine of cats. The most likely sources of *Giardia* are contaminated drinking water or ingesting *Giardia* from an infected litter mate or chronic carrier cat.

Giardia-infected cats usually have diarrhea which is yellowish-brown, soft, and foamy to frothy in appearance. A veterinarian can diagnose *Giardia* by identifying the organism in the feces. Treatment includes administering a specific drug. Cleaning and disinfecting cages and litter boxes with a dilute solution of liquid bleach will destroy the organisms that have been shed in the environment and help prevent reinfection. Take appropriate precautions in handling infected cats and fecal material since giardiasis may be transmitted to humans.

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