



## Cats Inappropriate Urination

It is normal for cats, male and female, whether neutered or not, to mark out their territory by spraying urine. In normal circumstances it is rare, discrete and outdoors. Sometimes cat spraying becomes visible and upsetting especially when cats spray or urinate within the home. It can be an indication that your cat is not fully content. Common reasons are listed below.

### Stress

Spraying can be due to stress related factors within or around the home.

- New neighbourhood cat, or home invasion (neighbourhood cat entering your home)
- New addition to family (baby, lodger, dog)
- Building work or decorating
- Competition over food bowls, litter trays, toys, sleeping areas, space
- Change in routine

### Litter Tray

- Cleanliness
- Access
- Location

The litter tray should be scooped twice daily and emptied completely at least once a week. Litter should be unscented, fine clumping and about 3cm deep. Avoid tray liners, as these can catch in the cats claws and cause the litter to spray upwards.

There should be one litter tray per cat, plus an extra one, in different areas of the home.

Location should be quiet, undisturbed and away from windows and glass doors so cannot be overlooked by other cats outside. Opaque film can be added onto windows and doors for privacy. There should be two exit points, for this reason we advise against covered trays. It is best to have a tray on each level of the house. The size of the tray should be one and a half times the length of the cat. A low sided tray should be used for elderly cats that may have arthritis, so it is easier for them to access. Avoid scented air freshener plugs near the trays, as these will put the cat off going to that area. Cats do not like to toilet near to where they eat, so keep food and water bowls far away from the litter trays.

### Habit

Once a cat has soiled in a particular area, they may return to the same spot on a regular basis. It is important to clean the area in a particular way to prevent this habit.

Clean the area with:

- 10% biological washing powder solution (1 part washing powder:9 parts water)
- Allow area to fully dry

- Spray with surgical spirit (test small area first to make sure does not leave mark or stain)
- Allow to dry before cat returns to area

### **Illness**

Illness and old age are common reasons for inappropriate urinating and it is advisable to have a vet check up, to assess your cat's health. Particularly if you have noticed an increase in urination or if the cat is only passing small amounts.

### **Cystitis & Feline Urinary Tract Disease**

Cystitis can be stress related and cause discomfort.

Signs of cystitis are:

- Excessive grooming, especially of the perineum area
- Altered behaviour with owner/other cats in the household
- Blood in the urine, increased urination, difficulty passing urine, passing small amounts of urine
- May be possible to avert an episode in some cats
- Unable to pass urine - should be seen by a vet straight away

### **Encourage Water Intake**

Water bowls should be cleaned and replenished regularly.

Encourage water intake with a water fountain (the one with the daisy).

Some cats love drinking from a pint glass or a tumbler, put one out for them.

Keep water bowls away from the litter trays.

Have several water bowls in areas where the cat spends time and on each level of house.

Ensure the journey to the water bowl is as short as possible.

Shallow ceramic bowls are often best, as cats prefer their whiskers not to touch the sides.

Wet food helps to increase total water intake, promotes hydration and increases urine dilution.

### **Happy Environment**

To create a happy environment, ensure there are plenty of hide and rest locations, areas for scratch, play, climb, view within the home.

Provide enough resources for each social group of cats.

Provide stimulation, particularly for indoor cats - puzzle feeders, scratching posts, toys.

Do not punish the cat for urinating or scratching in the wrong place. This will only make the cat fearful and likely make the problem worse.

International Society Feline Medicine: Five Pillars of a Healthy Feline Environment:

- Provide a safe place
- Provide multiple and separated key environmental resources: food, water, toileting areas, scratching areas, play areas, resting or sleeping places
- Provide opportunity for play and predatory behaviour
- Provide positive, consistent and predictable human-cat social interaction
- Provide an environment that respects the importance of the cat's sense of smell