



WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CAT PEES SOMEPLACE IT SHOULDN'T

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THE ISSUE

Sometimes a cat urinating in the wrong place is no big deal: a little pee one time on a tile floor, for example. But a cat that pees on your bed or that frequently pees anywhere it shouldn't can threaten an entire household's sense of domestic tranquility. This solution sheet is designed to help cat owners take good care of their cats *and* restore household bliss. Although it may not feel like it when you're in the moment, your cat is actually on your side in this endeavor: cats are fastidious creatures who really don't want to urinate outside their boxes; if you're finding pee where it doesn't belong, your cat is telling you something.

Here are two useful facts about cats and urination. **Fact #1)** If it hurts when a cat pees, they'll associate the pain with the place they peed (rather than with whatever hurts). Knowing this can help owners identify cats who are in pain. It also underscores another reason to address the problem quickly: the more times your cat associates pain with his litter box, the harder it will be to convince him to return to using it. **Fact # 2)** A cat who urinates outside his box onto a vertical surface such as a wall is probably spraying; the cause of this is more likely to be behavioral than medical.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN

Talk to your cat's veterinarian immediately if he shows one of these four signs of having a urinary blockage or other medical problem: 1) your cat stops peeing; 2) your cat visits the litter box often, but there is little or no output; 3) your cat cries while urinating (unless this is typical healthy behavior for your cat); 4) pinkish or bloody urine in or outside the litter box. Urinary blockages are painful and potentially fatal and must be treated promptly.

THE SOLUTION

Ending your cat's inappropriate urination begins with understanding why he's peeing where he shouldn't. If possible, visit a Mud Bay and work through our *My Cat is Peeing Where it Shouldn't* decision tree with a Mud Bay staffer. This will help you determine if your cat needs veterinary care and help you focus on the most promising solutions for your cat.

We've provided a variety of approaches and starred (*) the ones we think are critical for most cats that have begun peeing in the wrong place.

1 *Make his litter boxes 100% inviting

Most cats prefer a clean litter box, and a cat is entirely capable of deciding to pee outside of his box for no other reason than because it isn't clean enough. To ensure your cat never hesitates, provide at least two litter boxes; put them in different places and clean them once or twice daily. Most cats like to pee where they feel quiet and safe. Experiment with location and with open and covered boxes to find the pee situation your cat prefers. To prevent a situation where your cat dislikes all of his litter box choices (and chooses to pee outside his box), always keep your cat's top choice available—then test alternative boxes and locations against his favorite.

2 *Address your cat's urinary tract health

Your cat's change in urination habits may be related to his or her urinary tract health. If your cat has been diagnosed at any time with urinary tract issues, please see our solution sheet *How to Prevent the Recurrence of Lower Urinary Tract Disease*. If your cat has never been diagnosed with urinary tract issues, please see our solution sheet *How to Prevent Urinary Tract Problems in Cats*. In both solution sheets, please pay particular attention to the paragraph headed "When to Contact Your Veterinarian" and to the first solution: "Transitioning your cat to a moisture-rich, meat rich diet."

Mud Bay and its staff strive to help dog and cat owners improve the health of their animals and to increase the happiness owners experience in caring for their animals by providing natural foods, well-made supplies and useful information. Mud Bay and its staff do not diagnose or treat specific conditions, and the information provided by Mud Bay's staff, publications, website and other media are not substitutes for treatment by a veterinarian. A great vet is an invaluable resource, and we recommend that owners discuss diet and other changes in the care of their animals with theirs.

3 *Clean up smelly pee

Cat pee has a distinctive, lingering and—for most of us—unusually unpleasant smell. Allowing the smell to linger reduces domestic bliss and may encourage cats to pee nearby again. One key step in preventing re-visitation is using an enzymatic cleaner to treat the spot so that the cat, whose nose is much stronger than ours, cannot smell the residual pee. The enzymes and bacteria in these cleaners actually digest the cat urine, rather than just covering it up. It is important not to use any other cleaners before-hand or it will diminish the effectiveness. The choices we carry come in a variety of different scents as well as ways to use them.

4 Reduce environmental stress

Cats can experience stress from a wide variety of environmental causes, including causes that are not evident to their owners. See our *Reducing Stress in Cats* for help in understanding and alleviating environmental stress.

5 Reduce litter box stress

Cats that have experienced pain during urination or other urinary tract symptoms may develop a stress reaction to their litter box. Even after the original symptoms have disappeared, a cat may continue to be stressed out by his litter box. If you suspect this may be your cat's problem, you can alleviate litter box stress with one of these approaches:

- **Pheromones.** Synthetic pheromones like Feliway mimic the calming pheromones that cats naturally secrete. Both the natural and synthetic versions reduce cats' stress levels and their inclination to mark. Try spraying Feliway around litter boxes and in areas your cat spends time. Also try an electric unit that continuously emits small amounts of Feliway into the atmosphere.
- **Herbals and homeopathy.** Herbal and homeopathic calmatives are often surprisingly effective.
- **Prescription medication.** In some cases, it may take prescription medication to help your cat overcome the stresses triggered by his litter box. If you think you've exhausted other options, ask your vet whether this approach makes sense for your cat.

7 Improve kidney health and increase urination

Herbal supplements may help increase blood flow to the kidneys and increase urination frequency and volume.

8 Reduce chronic inflammation

Supplementation with the natural anti-inflammatories EPA and DHA may make urination easier for a cat that's having difficulty. Daily supplementation with salmon oil, pollock oil or another supplement with essential fatty acids is recommended.

RESULTS

If your cat was treated for a medical condition, then it's possible he will go back to using his litter box as soon as the condition is resolved. The same is true if the problem was a litter box that wasn't clean enough. Supplementation may take a few weeks to work. Behavioral problems may take more time and patience to resolve.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Mud Bay staffers are specifically trained to help cat owners with cats that are peeing in the wrong place. If you need more help or information, please ask us.

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