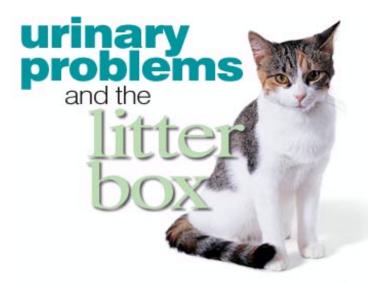
Litter Box Avoidance: Not Always a Behavior Problem

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



The owner of Ricki, a five-year-old calico cat, woke up one morning to find Ricki had dug up one of her plants, leaving a mess on the living room carpet. The owner dismissed the behavior as simply a reaction to the stress of having company the previous day.

Something just wasn't right...

The next day, however, Ricki had dug in the plant again, but this time, the owner smelled urine in the soil, Upon further inspection around the house, another spot of urine was found – this time on a rug in one of the bedrooms. Since Ricki had displayed no problems urinating outside her litter box previously, the owner began to suspect something was wrong.

Careful observation pays off...

She kept a close eye on Ricki all day, witnessing her squatting in her litter box many times and seeming to have difficulty urinating. When Ricki did go, she produced very little urine. At other times, Ricki eliminated in off-limits areas like a pile of laundry, a soft rug, and even on a sofa. Ricki also meowed in pain Medical Conditions: Cats avoiding the when picked up.

Getting help...

She brought Ricki in to our clinic right away and we examined Ricki, suspecting she had a urinary problem. We performed a urinalysis, which confirmed our suspicions: Ricki had a bacterial bladder infection.

Home again...

We sent Ricki and her owner home with antibiotics, instructions to provide the cat with plenty of fresh water, and an appointment for a month later. When we performed a urinalysis at her next visit, Ricki's infection had cleared up. The owner also reported that Ricki was back to her lively self, eliminating in her litter box again, and eating and drinking normally.

Veterinary Perspective...

(Factors Contributing to Inappropriate Elimination)

litter pan should be examined by a veterinarian to rule out a medical condition. Laboratory tests will need to be performed in most cases, however, if a condition does exist, immediate treatment will help resolve the behavioral problem. Possible medical conditions include: colitis, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism, kidney or liver disease, or feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD). Medical conditions such as arthritis

FLUTD, anal sac disease, and some forms of colitis, which cause pain urinating or defecating may also result in inappropriate elimination.

- Stress: Cats of all ages experience stress at some point in their lives (just like us). Stress can be a major cause of inappropriate elimination, and known stressors such as moving, changes in routine, or changes within the family structure (new members added or family members leaving home) can result in inappropriate elimination. Reducing these stressors or decreasing their impact on the household will benefit your cat and you, too.
- Box Location & Contents: Some cats may not like where their box is located; too close to their food or water, in a high traffic area, or on a different level of the house than where they spend most of their time. Some cats are very particular and will not defecate in the same box in which they urinate or go into a box which has been used by another cat. Most cats do not like a dirty litter box. Clean out waste from their litter boxes at least once daily, and wash the litter boxes weekly so that they don't decide to eliminate elsewhere in your home.

Our Doctors' Recommendations

<u>CleanAway</u> is perfect for getting rid of stains and odors effectively eliminating them before they have a chance to become



set-in and be permanently "attractive" to your cat. Leaves a pleasant scent as it attacks and kills the bacterial makeup of the waste products and can be used on any surface soiled by your cat.

Drinkwell Pet
Fountain
Fresh water is vital
for cat health and
this fountain is
perfect for getting
your cats to drink



more water daily ensuring proper hydration. Continuous flow of filtered water keeps water fresh and pure and is more appealing to your feline friend.

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Enhance and Freshen Up Your Cat's Litter Box Area... Control Mess and Odors



Privacy Kitty Screen



Automatic Deodorizer



Feliway