Inappropriate Elimination, Causes of

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Inappropriate elimination

WHY CATS DO IT AND HOW TO STOP IT

Inappropriate elimination seems to be in stark contrast to our perception of cats. Perhaps due to their reputation as being extremely fastidious animals, it is startling for cat owners to encounter evidence of inappropriate elimination. Learn what motivates this behavior and discover what you can do to curb this unwanted behavior.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO INAPPROPRIATE ELIMINATION

Inappropriate elimination includes urinating or defecating outside the litter box as well as spraying. This behavior can be demonstrated by cats of any age and stems from a variety of causes. Other than territorial behavior (spraying), the three most common causes include: medical conditions, stress, and litter box issues.

- MEDICAL CONDITIONS –
  Several medical conditions cause an increased need to urinate or defecate. These conditions include colitis, inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes mellitus, hyperthyroidism, kidney or liver disease, and feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD). Combined with pain or difficulty urinating (or defecating), these medical conditions can promote inappropriate elimination. Have your cat examined by your veterinarian for proper diagnosis and treatment of such medical conditions.
- STRESS –
  Cats are extremely sensitive to stress. Events such as moving, changes in routine, or any stressor may cause inappropriate elimination. Reduce these and other stressors whenever possible, or decrease their impact. Help your cat through stressful changes by making sure your cat has a quiet, safe place to retreat, such as a cat tree, hideaway, or window perch. In addition, consider using Feliway Spray, or Comfort Zone Plug-in with Feliway. These products contain a pheromone-like substance designed to help calm cats.
- LITTER BOX ISSUES – Your cat may have developed a litter (substrate) preference and may not like the feel or smell of the current cat litter. Try different types of litter, including clumping or non-scented litter, to help stop inappropriate elimination. Also, use litter boxes with lower sides for easy access, place the litter box in the area where the cat spends the most time, and increase the number of litter boxes. Most importantly, maintain a clean litter box. Remove waste from their litter boxes at least once daily, and wash the litter boxes weekly so your cat is not compelled to eliminate elsewhere in your home.

Spraying or Inappropriate Elimination?

While the end result may appear the same to cat owners, spraying and inappropriate urination are different. Urine spraying, or marking, is a specific territorial behavior most commonly associated with un-neutered male cats (toms) or multiple cat households. This behavior is motivated by a need to identify property or territory or to cover

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property or territory or to cover the scent of other cats. In contrast, inappropriate urination is more of a general behavior and is not motivated by territorial behavior.

Products We Recommend		
Drs. Foster and Smith OdorLogic® CleanAway	Feliway Comfort Zone Plug-In	Drinkwell Platinum System

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