



PREVENTING LITTER BOX PROBLEMS

The location of the litter box is very important, it should be kept in a spot that gives your cat privacy yet is conveniently located. If placed in a closet or bathroom, be sure the door is wedged open to prevent the cat from being trapped inside or locked out. Avoid putting litter boxes in areas by water heaters, water softeners, washing machines/dryers, and furnaces-as they can make intermittent loud noises that can cause a negative association with the litter pan. Turn off chimes and buzzers on washing machines and dryers if you must put boxes in the laundry room.

The rule of thumb for the number of litter boxes is to have one more box than cats. Some cats like to urinate in one box and defecate in another box. Place them in different locations in the house, preferably one box on each level of the house. If there are dogs in the household, find a location that prevents the dog from interfering with your cat's bathroom habits.

All boxes need to be kept extremely clean, try to scoop at least twice daily. An unscooped litter pan is like an unflushed toilet. Litter boxes should be cleaned every 2 weeks with hot water. Never use Lysol, Bleach, or other agents that have a strong odor to clean litter pans (remember cats have at least an 80 fold stronger sense of smell than humans).

The type of litter is also important. Most cats prefer fine grained litters, probably because they have a softer feel. Scoopable (clumping) litters have finer grains (softer feel) than regular clay litters. Some cats do not like the odor of scented litters. Try one litter box with scented and another with unscented and see which one your cat prefers. Once you find a litter you cat likes, stick with it. Do not place room deodorizers near the litter box. Your cat might not like the scent.

Covered litter boxes can be okay to use, but may bring potential problems. When using a covered litter box, you may forget to clean it as often as you should and it can trap odors inside making it unpleasant for your cat. In addition if you have an overweight cat, the covered box may not allow him enough room. Experiment with both types of litter boxes to figure out which one your cat prefers.

If your cat begins to eliminate outside of the box, always call your veterinarian as it may be due to a medical problem. Many conditions can cause a change in a cat's litter box habits.