



IS YOUR CAT URINATING ON YOUR BED?

There are many causes of feline elimination outside the litter box. This can be a very trying and stressful time for both you and your cat. A thorough physical examination and urinalysis by your veterinarian should be done first, to rule out any medical conditions such as diabetes or urinary tract infections. An urine culture/sensitive test, radiographs (x-rays) or ultrasound may be needed. Anxiety, stress, dislike of litter or box or box location, unclean litter boxes, and too few boxes can all play a role in inappropriate elimination behaviors with your cat.

Some general guidelines to follow:

1. If at all possible, try to have 1 litter box per cat + 1 box in your home
2. Most cats prefer uncovered litter boxes, especially if you have more than one cat. If you must have a covered box, you may want to cut a second exit hole in the box so your cat does not feel trapped. This is especially important if you have a dominant cat that may intimidate a more submissive cat.
3. Use a LARGE litter box. Most litter boxes today are too small for most cats. I use shallow sweater/storage boxes for my cats. If tall sides and elderly cat you may need to cut an entrance area for them.
4. You may need to try a different brand or type of litter. In a normal litter box visit, your cat should spend a few minutes in the box, first digging and circling, then using the box, then covering the bm or urine. If he/she jumps in, goes quickly, does not dig or cover afterwards, and jumps out this could be a litter aversion problem. Try Cat Attract litter (or their litter herb additive) or Sweat litter.
5. You may want to move the litter box to a new location or place a box where your cat is urinating. Usually cats prefer quieter, less traffic areas which are still in their "home area".
6. Sometimes just purchasing a new, clean and different color box will work well. It is recommended that you replace litter boxes yearly as the plastic will begin to accumulate lots of bad odors.
7. Most importantly, make sure to clean your litter box daily, especially for those cats who do not always use the litter box. Just as you or I would go to the next stall if we came upon a dirty public restroom so may your cat!
8. Clean well all areas of urine done outside the box - I recommend Urine Away or MY PET PEED.
9. Purchase some Ceva Feliway diffusers (multi cat or classic or both) to help reduce stress.
10. Always have your cat examined and an urinalysis and/or other testing done to rule out underlying medical issues.

Treatment strategy involves improving your cats environment, possible diet changes (Royal Canin Urinary Calm/Hills CD and others), pain meds/muscle relaxers during episodes, antianxiety medications (Paxil, Prozac, Elavil). We may also recommend supplements like Cosequin and VRS Flo. Each case or cat is different and we need to find what works best for them.

INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS - a painful bladder condition that some cats have...

HELP! My cat is peeing outside the box...

We once thought that most of these cats had urinary tract infections and most were and are treated with antibiotics. Recent research shows that only 1-5% of cats with inappropriate urination (IU) have an infection and only about 5% or less have behavioral issues. We now know that many of these cats with IU, blood and protein in the urine, and bladder pain have Interstitial Cystitis (also sometimes called Idiopathic Cystitis or Pandora Syndrome). 4-5 million cats with IU end up at shelters and most of them are destroyed. The patient is typically a high stress or anxious cat. Painful episodes often last just 5-7 days.

If your cat has inappropriate urination it should be taken to the veterinarian as soon as possible. A urinalysis should be performed to rule out other causes such as an infection. If this is a chronic or recurrent concern then a urine culture/sensitivity should be submitted for analysis and blood work, abdominal x-rays and ultrasound should be done to rule out infection, kidney disease, diabetes, bladder or kidney stones, abdominal tumor, etc.

We now know that many of these cats with IU have Interstitial Cystitis (IC). If the above testing is all negative and nothing else found, these cats most likely have IC. This is a very painful disease which involves bladder wall thickening, decrease in the GAG layer (the protective "slime" layer inside the bladder wall) and urine and inflammatory cell leakage into the bladder wall. When the cat attempts to use the box it hurts and the cat starts associating this pain with the use of the litter box and starts to urinate elsewhere. Often this IU is found on bedding, clothes, carpet, bath tubs, etc. It is yet unknown why this happens in some cats but stress can definitely increase the chance of occurrence in the cat. Most of these will resolve spontaneously with the first episode in 5-7 days but most do recur within 12 months. We now know that these cats should NOT be treated with antibiotics but rather with pain medication and anti-spasmodic tranquilizers for 5-7 days.

There are many things that can certainly decrease your cat's stress so try the following:

1. Make sure to clean the litter box daily, especially if your cat has IC.
2. Ideally, have 1 more box than the number of cats you have and place these in multiple areas of your home.
3. Offer a couple different types of litter, preferably unscented. Clean urine soiled areas of the home well. Products such as Equalizer, Urine Off or Zero Odor seem to work well. I did like Urine Away but now highly recommend MY PET PEED which can be purchased online.
4. Try Cat Attract litter or their sprinkle herb product or Swheat litters.
5. Use a large litter box, especially for cats over 6#. I actually use a couple large sweater boxes for my cats.
6. Use canned/wet food vs. dry kibble. Although there is no food labeled for this disease, in recent

studies, cats fed canned food had a significant much less recurrence rate of IC.

7. Always have fresh water available in multiple areas.
8. Attempt to decrease the stress level of your cat. This is very important and has been shown to decrease the recurrence of IU!
9. Sometimes we need to use Buprenorphine oral pain control and Acepromazine oral meds for 5 days.
10. I also recommend using **Royal Canin Urinary Calm food** which usually helps these cats immensely.

Cats easily pick up on your stress levels and multi-cat homes can be more stressful for many cats. Holidays, moving, new pets in the home and dirty litter boxes can also cause much stress for your cat.

Here are some recommendations for decreasing a cat's stress levels:

1. Spend a little more quality time with your cat. Most inside cats are quite bored. Try the feather toys or laser pointer games.
2. Offer a cat tower or climbing area for your cat. They like to get vertical.
3. Purchase a bird, fish or other tape or DVD for your cat and play it while you are away.
4. Offer "kitty drugs" such as catnip, honeysuckle, or valerian which can be very relaxing to many cats.
5. Read a couple great books about cats such as From the Cat's Point of View by Gwen Bohnenkamp and Felinestein by Cindy Ribarich & Suzanne Delzio.

Treatment strategy involves improving your cats environment, possible diet changes (Royal Canin Urinary Calm/Hills CD and others), pain meds, muscle relaxers and anti-spasmodics during episodes and long term antianxiety medications (Paxil, Prozac, Elavil). We may also recommend supplements like Cosequin and VRS Flo. Each case or cat is different and we need to find what works best for them. Unfortunately, this is not a quickly curable disease but rather a chronic management and treatment if/when symptoms occur.

My own rescue cat, Theo, has this disease and I know how very frustrating it can be! Finding or smelling cat urine in your home (outside the litter box) is awful (and a very painful bladder is even more awful for your cat). Theo is currently on Paxil in a pill pocket daily, RC Urinary Calm diet and VRS Flo supplement which seems to working very well for him.

So in conclusion, see your vet to diagnose this disease and when recurrence occurs. Then improve the cat's environment, offer canned/wet food and increase stimulation for your cat. For more information give us a call.

Some websites with good information:

www.catvets.com/public/PDFs/ClientBrochures/HouseSoiling-WebView.pdf

indoorpet.osu.edu/veterinarians/environmental-enrichment-resources-and-references

<https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>