



Navarro Small Animal Clinic

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Feline House Soiling

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Urinating in places other than the litter box is one of the most common behavioral problems in cats. IT can be caused by a medical or behavioral problem. Cats often urinate in unusual places to get their owner's attention that something is wrong. Other times the issue is behavioral and can be due to stress, litter box aversion, or simply claiming their territory.

Medical issues that can lead to inappropriate urination include Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease (FLUTD) or inflammation of the bladder, urinary tract infection, and urinary blockage. Signs that your cat may have a medical condition causing inappropriate urination include straining to urinate, genital licking, bloody urine, and urinating frequently. If your cat is experiencing any of these signs it is best to visit your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will perform a thorough physical exam, acquire a detailed history, and collect a urine sample from your cat. Ultrasound examination of the bladder is very useful to look for bladder thickening and stones. If any of these problems are found then your veterinarian will assess these issues first. If treatment does not resolve the issue of house soiling then other actions may need to be taken.

Feline house soiling may be caused by many different issues such as litter box aversion or territorial anxiety. In male cats neutering intact males is the first step in addressing the problem. Urination is a cat's way of marking their territory or claiming the area. This is particularly a problem in intact male cats. Psychological stress can also make a cat eliminate inappropriately. These stresses include the owner being gone for long periods of time, introducing a new pet into the household, presence of other cats, change in cat litter, or moving the litter box.

Prior to medical therapy, you can try several things to help alleviate the problem. Additional litter boxes should be added to the household in separate locations. Make sure the litter box is large enough for your cat. The box should be one and half times your cat's length. You can try various types of litter and see which one your cat likes best. You can try additives to the litter to help attract your cat to the box. Make sure your cat's food is away from their feeding area. If your cat is older then you may want to consider a lower litter box so that they don't have to jump in and out. Scoop your litter boxes daily to keep as clean as possible. Clumping litter should be changed at least monthly and non-clumping litter should be changed twice weekly. If none of these seem to work then you may need to confine your cat to a small room. You can gradually allow the cat to move into a larger room if he/she is using the litter box, followed by access to the house. If you have exhausted all efforts then the next option may be to consult your veterinarian about trying hormone treatments or anti-anxiety medications.

