

LITTER BOX ISSUES

Location

The litter box should be kept in a location that affords your cat some privacy, but is also conveniently located. If you place the litter box in a closet or a bathroom, make sure the door is left open so that your cat is not trapped in or out. Depending on where it is located, you might consider cutting a hole in a door and adding a swinging door. If you have a small kitten or an older cat, keep in mind that they may not be able to go up and down multiple stairs and you may need to relocate the litter box.

Type of Litter

Research has shown that most cats prefer fine-grained, unscented litters. These are usually the scoopable litters, but there are also high quality, dust-free clay litters that are acceptable to many cats. Pellet-type litters or those made from citrus peels are not recommended. Once you find a litter your cat likes, don't change types or brands. Using a variety of litters, deodorants or deodorizers, and strong cleaning solutions may cause your cat to stop using the box.

Number and Types of Boxes

You should have at least one box for every cat you have, plus one. Place them around the house and on each level of the house. This will help prevent one cat from "guarding" the area where the boxes are and preventing access by all of the cats.

Some people prefer covered boxes, but not all cats will use a covered box.

- Sometimes odor becomes trapped in the box and may be offensive to your cat.
- Some cats are too large to comfortably use a covered box.
- A covered box may make it easier for another cat to lay in wait and "ambush" the user as they exit the box.

- For timid cats, a covered box may feel more private and may be preferred.

Cleaning the Box

The boxes should all be scooped daily and the litter should be completely changed 1-2 times per week depending on your cats and the type of litter you are using. Don't use strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products when washing the litter box, as it may cause your cat to avoid it. Washing with mild soap and water should be sufficient. A thin layer of baking soda placed on the bottom of the box will help absorb odors without repelling your cat.

Liners

Some cats will use a box with a liner and some will not. If you do use a liner, make sure it's anchored down so that it's not pulled out of place by your cat's claws.

Depth of Litter

Most cats prefer a litter depth of about two inches, but some long haired cats may prefer less litter.

"Litter-Training" Cats

This is not necessary and not recommended. The best thing to do is to have an acceptable litter box available using the guidelines given and to gently show your new cat or kitten where the boxes are located.

If Problems Develop

If your cat begins to eliminate in areas other than the litter box, your first call should always be to your veterinarian. Many medical conditions can cause a change in a cat's litter box habits.

