



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5 • MAY 2011 NEWSLETTER

INAPPROPRIATE ELIMINATION

Cats have instinctive urges to urinate and defecate in specific ways. A majority of feline house soiling problems are not due to abnormal behavior; they are due to normal, instinctual behavior that often can be modified.

When taking a look at behavior modification, obtaining a thorough history of both the kitty and the problem behavior is an important part of the solution. For example, if a more mature kitty with arthritis has to climb stairs for each potty break, she may decide to go where it is easier for her—which may not be where you'd like her to go.

Other issues also should be considered. How many cats are in the household, and share litter boxes? How many boxes are present, and where they are located? What type of litter is being used? (Certain kinds of litter—plain clay, clumping scented or antibacterial, newspaper or pine pellets, pearls—may be an attractant or cause aversion for each kitty.)

Other driving factors that can take the kitty out of the potty box and onto your favorite comforter include a new person (baby, roommate) or animal in the household; something outside a window (such as a stray or neighborhood animal); or a previous negative experience while using the box (for example, a washer or dryer buzzer going off in close proximity). Medical problems may also be the culprit; uncomfortable urination due to urinary tract infection, crystals, or inflammation may manifest outside the litter box.

Lack of good litter box hygiene may also be a cause of inappropriate elimination. It's very important to thoroughly clean litter boxes on a regular basis with water and a mild detergent, such as Dawn dish soap. (Do not use strong-smelling cleaners, as they can be quite toxic to your kitty, and

may discourage litter box use because of their strong smell.) It's prudent to scoop litter boxes twice daily, and offer multiple boxes for multi-kitty households. (As recommended by many behaviorists, the average number of boxes per kitty is 1.3, so a 2-kitty household should have 3 boxes.)

Another important consideration is location; avoid placing litter boxes in noisy or disruptive areas. Litter box hoods may create an aversion for kitties who can't cope with the strong smell of litter or waste build up, and may also cause respiratory problems for kitties with asthma or allergies. Some cats feel that plastic liners have an unappealing texture when stepped on, so may avoid the box if liners are used.

As you can see, there are many factors that can contribute to a kitty pottying outside the box. If your kitty begins eliminating in inappropriate places, or if you notice any change related to litter box usage, it's always best for your veterinarian to analyze your kitty's urine and stool to rule out medical causes. Once this has been done, we can work with you on a plan to address behavioral issues related to inappropriate elimination.

FELINE PARASITE PREVENTION

Along with warmer weather typically comes an increase in parasite population. Feline parasites are divided into two broad categories: those that live outside the body (such as fleas, mites, lice, and ticks), and those that live inside the body (such as roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, heartworms, and ringworms).

Parasites are not only annoying to you and your cat, they can also spread disease and, if left untreated, may lead to serious medical problems. There are a number of easy-to-administer monthly topical medications

to help prevent feline parasites. Please ask us for more information.

JOIN US ON MAY 22 FOR OUR ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR!

Please join us on **Sunday, May 22** for our third annual Cat's Meow Arts & Crafts Fair. The fair will be held from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** in our back parking lot.

Come and browse many unique handmade and artisanal items, including jewelry, beaded purses, quilts, tote bags, aprons, pillows, etched wood jewelry, cat trees, dog clothing, children's books, and much more.

Fairgoers can participate in a raffle for a chance to win great prizes, including an exam and labwork for your kitty from the Sacramento Cat Hospital (a \$270 value), an autographed picture of Tony Shalhoub (star of the hit TV show "Monk"), gorgeous cat trees, and much more. Winners need not be present.

We look forward to seeing you at the fair!

MAY SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through May 31, bring your kitty in for boarding at the Sacramento Cat Hospital, and take advantage of several great deals!

During May, our regular boarding fee of \$25 a night will be just \$19.95 a night, and includes a free nail trim! (Please note that additional charges will apply for dispensation of medications or other treatments while your kitty stays with us.) If your kitty stays with us for 10 nights, 1 of those nights will be at no charge. If your kitty stays with us for 20 nights, 3 of those nights will be at no charge! Please ask us for more information.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our staff members.