



The CAT Clinic Catalyst

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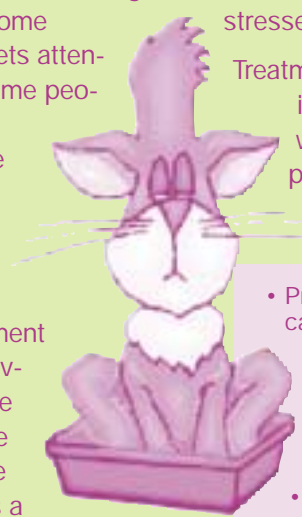
East Chatswood Cat Clinic Ph: 9417 6613 Febr 2002

The Cat isn't using the Litter Tray

This is really breaking the unwritten rule of cat ownership, and is very distressing for everyone. It is also a very common cause of euthanasia or

abandonment of cats, so is a problem to be taken very seriously. An understanding of cat communication is essential - they are **VERY SMELL ORIENTED**. Cats use urine and faeces to post messages for other cats (and their humans, whom they do actually regard as being slightly incompetent cats, according to some research). Cat urine, especially, always gets attention, and if you compare it to people - some people have loud voices or shout when they want their opinion noticed, cats use urine to try to tell us about their problems and some have stronger urine than others. A key point here is that if a cat pees or poops on your bed, it's because they love you (usually), so take it as a compliment (!) but then move on to establishing behaviour that you can live with. The sooner the problem is addressed the better, because once there is a learned component to the behaviour, and it becomes ingrained, it is a habit and is much harder to break the cycle.

The other comparison that we make, is that where humans get 'stress headaches', even migraines, cats' 'stress organ' is the bladder. If a cat can't get its message across with subtleties of body language and 'timeshare' agreements - especially with other cats, but also with new or young humans - then the next level of communication is usually with urine. Humans can not ignore the smell of cat pee, but unfortunately the attention it draws is usually of the unpleasant, punishment kind. When a cat can't pee where it wants to - often because another cat has taken over its patch of the garden, or even the house, then many cats (up to 10% of males and 5 % of females) will start peeing or even spraying in the house in a desperate bid to defend their 'core territory'. They will even pass blood in their urine as the bladder spasms in anxiety. Once the bladder wall is damaged, the urine itself irritates the bladder lining and the



problem becomes 'set in' or chronic. The cats most prone to cystitis and spraying are at the two ends of the behaviour scale - the nervous Nellie who can't make their wishes known any other way, and the very outgoing cat with a big territory to patrol. The 'ordinary' cat between these two usually just accepts its lot, but any cat can be stressed enough to make it spray.

Treatment options are many and varied, and although it is preferable to reduce or eliminate the causes whenever possible, unfortunately it is not always possible to identify or do anything about them, and often there is more than one cause. In this case, medical intervention is required.

- Prevent other cats entering - Strange cats can be kept out by fitting the resident with a magnetic collar which activates the lock on their cat door. Otherwise, block off the cat flap and let your cat in and out by hand.
- Keep Litter Clean - It is always a good idea to keep litter scrupulously clean, and often an extra litter tray is all that is required, so your cat does not have to 'expose' themselves in the garden and aggravate their more territorial neighbour. Faeces should be removed immediately it is seen or smelt, and to completely replace the litter once a day for the very fussy cat. There are many types of litter available, from very fine gravel-type (the one about 50% of cats have a preference for), through several types of clumping and biodegradable types. There is a new 'pearl' type litter made of sand which absorbs urine immediately - as cats evolved in the desert, this seems to be the best way to go. Be aware that a lot of cats do NOT like the 'deodorized' type as it is designed for our noses not theirs.
- Provide a Covered Litter Tray - Some cats want complete privacy for their toilette - you can try a cardboard box over the top of the tray with a door cut in it. Be aware that this makes it more difficult to see and smell waste products, and the smell can build up enough to repel the cat. Charcoal filtered covers are available.



- Clean soiled areas - For your own residential enjoyment you will probably wish to remove the sight and smell of the deposits. Removal of the odour is particularly important when soiling

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The Cat isn't using the Litter Tray

is done repeatedly in the same place. There are several very effective products available at the Cat Clinic. It can, however, be up to 4 weeks to actually have the smell disappear for the cat - remember their noses are more sensitive than ours, and their urine is designed to 'hang around' as a message centre. **NEVER USE DISINFECTANTS** (especially ammonia-based ones), as it then smells like a tiger has come and peed in their house and it upsets cats even more. The same problem arises during renovations - apparently a lot of solvents used in building and painting smell like tiger pee - and yet the tiger is never seen for the cat to be able to appease it!

- Provide Extra Litter trays - Put litter trays over repeatedly soiled areas. Once there is consistent use, you can merge them into one tray, and move it (very slowly, 5 cm at a time sometimes) to where you want the tray. You may need one tray per cat plus one extra in multicat households. Also place trays in secure, private places away from food and foot traffic.

Loss of housetraining is a serious problem. Cats never 'make mistakes' when it comes to using the litter tray. There is always a message for us, but because we can't always really understand their thoughts and motivations, we have to try to guess the message or the problem. Trial and error is the only way we can attempt this - it is not possible to 'get it right' first time every time. However, consistency, observation and perseverance will result in nearly every cat becoming a pleasurable pet again.



Cat Trivia

1. How many rows of whiskers on a cat's muzzle?
2. What is their technical name?
3. What is the folkloric origin of the Maine Coon cat?
4. What type of cat starred in both 'Diamonds are Forever' and 'A Clockwork Orange'?
5. Which other feline film did Roddy McDowell star in?
6. What is the name of the artist who was also a show manager and Judge of the National Cat Club in the UK in 1890?
7. The Korat was the 'watch cat' of which countries temples and why?
8. Which ancient cultures believed the time could be estimated by looking at a cat's eyes?
9. What nationality was the original cartoonist for Felix the Cat?
10. Who classified the domestic cat as felis catus ?
11. Who invented the cat flap?
12. Who had a replica of their English house built in Italy so his cat would not be put out by moving there? and the cat's name?

Answers

1. Four 2. Vibrissae 3. cats mated with raccoons 4. a chinchilla (called Solomon) 5. That Darn Cat Disney 1964 6. Louis Wain 7. Siam / Thailand Why? It has sensitive hearing 8. Ancient Egyptians + Chinese 9. Australian Pat Sullivan in 1919 10. Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus in 1758 11. Sir Isaac Newton 12. Edward Lear, Foss



How Smart is your Cat

People are continually surprised to find that cats are smart enough to get what they want. They are even intelligent enough to avoid work if they so desire! Just because few cats will 'work' like dogs - for praise or food rewards - does not mean they can't. In fact, only cats and primates can learn by observing another one doing a task, rather than teach themselves by trial and error. We catlovers know that if only we could improve the questions, the cats would surprise us even more with their answers!

Staff News

Well, **Sam** and **Fiona** have both married

recently (different blokes though!), and had some interesting times on their honeymoons. They were each away for over a month before Christmas - and we missed them sorely! However, the Clinic is back into the swing, as we finish another 'summer season' of boarding and KITTEN PLACEMENT. Please remind your friends - if you want a kitten, NOW'S THE TIME - **cats don't produce kittens in the winter!** and they're NOT like apples - they cannot be kept in cold storage to stay kittens!

Dr. Kim is going to change her own roster. She will be available only on **Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, beginning from April this year.** This covers

news & views

LATEST BEST FLEA CONTROL PRODUCT?

Well, at the Cat Clinic, we try to tailor you and your cat's needs (both fiscal and ease of application of the product) to keep your cat from being bothered by these pesky insects, and your carpet from being infested by their eggs and larvae. Other considerations such as the amount of time your cat spends outdoors, with other cats and whether ticks also matter have to be considered. For TOTAL, PERFECT FLEA CONTROL, one can rarely surpass **Revolution** (as per the advert - it kills nearly everything that bothers a cat). However, if there are PARALYSIS TICKS out there, then **Frontline Plus** is the go - at double strength and increased frequency. The Plus bit kills the eggs of fleas who have (already!) become resistant. **Advantage** still kills fleas and some of their eggs, so is a good alternative where ticks are not involved. For cats who seldom venture outdoors, then EGG ELIMINATING products such as **Cyclio**, the **Duogard collar**, and good old **foggers** still fit the bill. If KNOW THINE ENEMY is the best way to success, then **ASK US ABOUT FLEAS** - we're onto their favourite 'tricks of the trade', and try to stay **one jump ahead!**

most of the times cats seem to need her attention! The Clinic will also start to offer routine surgeries such as speying and castration on Saturdays and Sundays as well. If we can get a reliable groomer in time, we will offer full grooms on Saturdays as well. The Clinic will, of course, still be open during the week, though there may be a couple of different 'veterinary faces' around. As always we will do the best we can to sort out any 'feline related' problems you have as they arise, and Sam and Fiona will still be the glue that holds it all together! We sincerely hope you will find these changes to your liking!