

Inappropriate Toileting



Most cats will go to the toilet in the litter tray without any training. But in some cases, a cat may go to the toilet outside of the litter tray (eg. on the floor, on furniture or on a bed) and this is called 'inappropriate toileting'.

Inappropriate toileting can be frustrating (and messy) but there is always an underlying cause. The cat isn't doing it to 'spite' you as there is always a reason why a cat toilets inappropriately. Our goal is to identify the reason and fix it so the cat will use the litter tray.

Never punish the cat for toileting inappropriately and doing so could make the issue worse.

Some common reasons why the cat may not be using the litter tray include the following:

- **Medical reasons:** The cat could be suffering from a medical condition that could be interfering with the cats ability to go to the toilet in the litter tray. A UTI, bladder infection and excessive diarrhea could cause the cat to toilet outside the litter tray. If you notice the cat straining, urinating small amounts frequently outside the litter tray or having diarrhea, these are some of the symptoms that indicate it could be caused by a medical issue. If you are a Kemps Creek Shelter foster carer, contact the vet clinic. For branch foster carers, contact the Welfare Officer of your branch.
- **Litter type:** Try using another litter type (eg. paper litter, crystals or clay) as the cat may be used to, or prefer a specific type of litter.
- **Location:** Cats prefer litter trays to be in quiet rooms and in the corner or a side of a room. They like their privacy so if the tray is in the middle of a room where lots of people gather or next to a loud washing machine, it's in the wrong spot!
- **Cleanliness:** The cat may be fussy and demand a clean litter tray every time they go to the toilet. This may be more likely if the cat walks up to the litter tray to examine it (without toileting) and then goes to the toilet later on, elsewhere.
- **Litter tray type:** Some cats prefer different types of litter trays. Some prefer a tray without a top and others demand a top for their litter tray. Kittens and geriatric cats may prefer a litter tray with low sides so they can easily get in and use it.
- **Litter tray liner:** Some cats don't like them. If you're using one, try removing it.
- **Not enough litter trays:** Have 1 litter tray for each cat you have, plus an extra tray.
- **Stress:** A simple change in the environment and/or living conditions for the cat could cause enough stress for the cat to inappropriately toilet. Eg. moving to a new home, new person in the home, new animal in the home, excessive unwanted contact from humans or even furniture being moved around in the home. Spraying a feline pheromone spray such as Feliway in the room may help.
- **Spraying:** Spraying is when a cat urinates (generally a small amount of urine on a vertical surface) to 'make their territory'. Both male and female cats can do this and it's generally done by undesexed cats.

If you have made adjustments and you see the cat use the litter tray properly, reward the cat immediately after with their favourite treat.

Consider temporarily covering couches (and other furniture) and block access to some of the rooms whilst the inappropriate toileting issue is being resolved.