LITTER BOX PROBLEMS

Litter Box Problems in Cats: Causes and Solutions

At least 10% of cats develop elimination problems, ranging from avoiding the litter box entirely to only using it for urination or defecation. Causes include conflicts between cats, dislike of the litter or box type, past medical issues, or the box's location.

Common Causes:

- **Litter Box Management:** Insufficient cleaning, too few boxes, or boxes that are too small or hard to access.
- **Surface Preferences:** Some cats prefer certain surfaces like carpets or bedding.
- **Litter Preferences:** Cats may dislike new types of litter.
- **Location Preferences:** Cats avoid boxes in disliked areas.
- **Physical Limitations:** Geriatric or disabled cats may struggle with certain boxes.
- **Negative Associations:** Painful elimination or stressful events in the box can cause avoidance.
- **Household Stress:** Changes like new animals or routines can lead to anxiety.
- **Multi-Cat Conflict:** Cats may block each other from accessing boxes.

Medical Issues to Rule Out:

- Urinary Tract Infections, Feline Interstitial Cystitis, Kidney Stones, and Blockages can cause pain or urgency leading to outside-the-box elimination.

What to Do:

- **Prevention:** Ensure clean, accessible boxes (one per cat, plus one extra). Avoid hoods or liners, and provide shallow, clumping, unscented litter.
- **Surface Preferences:** Make unwanted surfaces less appealing by using motion-activated lights, tin foil, or sticky tape. Place boxes in desirable locations.
- **Litter Preferences:** Offer various types of litter to find the preferred one. We recommend Dr. Elsey’s cat litter to help cats with litter issues.
- **Physical Needs:** Ensure boxes are accessible to senior or disabled cats.
- **Address Negative Associations:** Gradually reintroduce the box without force. Ensure no stressful experiences occur around the box.

By understanding your cat's behavior and addressing these issues early, you can prevent and resolve litter box problems effectively.