



QUESTIONNAIRE – WHY WON'T MY CAT USE THE LITTER TRAY?

Owner's name:

Pet's name:

Age:

Sex:

Desexed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Breed:

Is the cat kept 100% indoors or in an enclosure: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please work through this questionnaire and answer all the questions.

If medical issues, anxiety or stress-related causes have been identified, present this questionnaire to your veterinarian during the consult. They will be able to work with you to develop a treatment plan. You may be referred to a veterinary behaviourist for further help.

	Yes or No	Comments
Problem		
Is the cat urinating outside the litter tray?		
Is the cat defecating outside the litter tray?		
Does the cat ever use the litter tray for either urine or faeces?		If yes, please tick whether for <input type="checkbox"/> urine <input type="checkbox"/> faeces or <input type="checkbox"/> both
Does your cat ever go to the toilet outside, if not an indoor cat?		
How often does the problem occur – daily/weekly?		
When did the problem start? Did this coincide with another event such as getting a new pet or a renovation?		
Behaviour		
Does the cat urinate in a squatting position?		This is the normal position for urinating.
Does the cat back up to objects, with the tail upright, twitch its tail or tread up and down with its back legs and squirt urine out backwards?		This is called <i>spraying</i> or <i>marking</i> and is a form of communication. Spraying is usually a result of stress or anxiety.
Do you find urine puddled on the floor? If so, is it against a wall or not?		If against a wall, the cat probably sprayed the wall and it has puddled on the floor. See above.
Does the cat show signs of pain while urinating, such as meowing or hissing, OR squat and deposit tiny amounts, OR strain and pass nothing OR pass mucous or blood when straining to urinate?		If yes, to any of these, the cat needs a full medical examination including urinalysis. If the cat is straining and not passing anything, this is a medical emergency.
Does the cat have diarrhoea or have sudden urges to defecate?		This suggests a medical problem and investigation is required to rule out diet intolerance, parasites and other causes.
Does the cat perch on the edge of the tray and avoid getting its paws in the litter?		This suggests the cat does not like the type of litter in the tray.
Does the cat cover its deposit in the tray?		If not, this could suggest a dislike of the type of litter being used.
Does the cat hide a lot, or avoid interaction it used to enjoy?		If yes, look at problems in the cat's environment, rule out medical conditions and consider anxiety or other behavioural problems such as cognitive dysfunction syndrome.
Is the cat vocalising more at night?		If yes, look at problems in the cat's environment, rule out medical conditions and consider anxiety or other behavioural problems such as cognitive dysfunction syndrome.

Preferences		
Does the cat have a favourite place it goes to the toilet such as the lounge room or laundry basket?		If yes, then the cat has learnt to prefer using these locations. Retraining the cat to use the litter tray may help.
Does the cat toilet when in view, or secretly?		If secretly, the cat may have been previously punished for going to the toilet in these places, or the location of the tray may be a problem. Retraining the cat to use the litter tray may help.
Where is the litter tray positioned in the house?		Consider positioning the tray in low traffic areas, but easily accessible. Cats like to walk in one side of the tray and exit on the other side.
What type of tray do you use. Is it covered, hooded, with a liner?		Consider providing a range of different trays for your cat to choose a preference. A litter tray should be 1.5 times the length of your cat.
What type of litter is being used? Clumping, pellets, crystals? What brand is it?		Consider providing a range of different litter types for your cat to choose a preference.
Habits		
How often do you scoop out urine clumps and faeces from the tray?		Most cats are fastidiously clean and like the tray to be clean when they use it, so removal of clumps daily is recommended.
How often do you wash out the tray and replace the litter?		Complete emptying of the tray and washing in detergent weekly is recommended.
Household		
How many cats are living in the house?		Toilet problems are more common in houses with more than one cat, especially if they don't get along.
How many litter trays do you have?		It is recommended each cat have their own litter tray, plus one extra for the house and placed in different locations.
Do the cats live together happily? Do they fight?		Toilet problems are more common in houses with more than one cat, especially if they don't get along. Stress can cause changes in behaviour, including toilet habits.
If you have more than one cat, are you confident you know which one is not using the litter tray?		This is really important but can be difficult to determine. If you are unsure, talk to your veterinarian.
Do you have other pets which your cat has to interact with? If yes, what are they and how do they get along?		Cats are social animals and can form close friendships and benefit from interaction when they choose to. They can also be unaccepting of a newcomer to their household and this can create stress.
If you have a dog, does it like to 'clean up' the litter tray?		Litter trays should be kept in a quiet, private area.
Medical history		
Has the cat had any laboratory tests done, such as blood or urine tests, since the problem presented? If so, please make the results available.		A thorough medical examination is always recommended when there is a behavioural problem.
Is the cat on any medication? If so, please provide details.		Some medication can alter toileting patterns and may be contributing to the problem.
Is the cat over six years of age? If so, does it have mobility problems?		Arthritis is a common cause for cats to have trouble getting in and out of the litter tray.
Have you tried any medical treatments or other therapies to reduce the problem? If so what, for how long and what was the result?		
Have you tried any pheromone products such as ®Feliway? If yes, what was the result?		
Have you tried any products to remove urine or faeces in the environment? If yes, please describe.		Non-ammonia based products must be used like washing powder or detergent. An enzymatic, biodegradable odour neutraliser must also be used.

The important questions you may now be able to answer are:

1. Is this marking or toileting behaviour?
2. Is this likely to be related to problems with the litter tray, litter type or cleanliness issues?
3. Is your cat happy in its home environment or having problems with other animals?
4. Is stress or anxiety contributing to the problem?
5. What has been the effect or lack of effect of previous measures taken to address the problem?
6. Do medical tests need to be done?



Polite Pets Month is proudly supported by Royal Canin and CEVA Animal Health



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