

BEHAVIOURAL MODIFICATION FOR CATS THAT URINATE INAPPROPRIATELY

- Try and determine if the cat has experienced a recent stress in its life. “Stressors” could include changes in the weather, the cat’s environment (a recent move, addition of a new pet or new family member), the diet or feeding schedule, type of litter used, etc.
- Provide at least one litter box per cat, plus one.
- Keep the litter boxes in a quiet area of the home (avoid high-noise or high-traffic areas). Try placing one litter box in a spare room for the affected cat (a room that other cats/pets in the household do not have access too).
- Do not use covered litter boxes.
- Use unscented, fine-grained type litters (note that, different cats like different litter types). Play with the depth of the litter to determine the cat’s preference.
- Change the litter frequently (scoop daily, change entire litter box weekly).
- Keep food and water bowls in a quiet area of the home, away from windows, heat vents, exhaust fans, etc. Keep the food and water bowls away from the litter box location.
- Allow the problematic cat more space, and a chance to “be a cat”. Don’t forget: cats are independent creatures that like to be in control. It would be great if the cat could have its own scratching post, food and water bowls and litter box. Provide toys that allow the cat to chase and catch, and adequate surfaces for scratching behaviour. If you use a laser pointer, there must be a toy associated (cat must be reward with a “capture”).
- Make any changes in the cat’s routine, including diet changes, very slowly.
- There are sprays that your veterinarian may recommend in an attempt to decrease “environmental anxiety”. Such sprays can be used in the environment close to the litter box, close to the food and water bowls, and in favourite areas the cat likes to be.
- Your veterinarian may recommend drug therapy in highly stressed cats.

(This information is from Medi-Cal, Royal Canin Veterinary Diet.)