



## Avoiding the Litter Box Blues

### **KEEP IN MIND**

- Cats WANT to use their litter box and litter box issues can be as stressful for them as they are upsetting to you.
- Cats are great communicators however, since we don't speak the same language, so their communications are often misunderstood.
- Don't forget the possibility of an underlying medical condition- a medical checkup can be key to determining if the litter box blues are a result of something bothering your cat internally.

### **LOCATION**

- Out of sight out of mind for you, out of luck for kitty- it may be convenient for you to put the litter box somewhere tucked away but that can lead to a cat feeling trapped and unsafe.
- Often the best place to put a litter box is socially significant for the cat which is often significant for you as well.
- Don't move the litter box around too much as this could surprise your cat at an inconvenient time.
- Have multiple floors? Have a box on every floor to ensure kitty has a place to go.

### **SHARING**

- Multiple cats sharing a litter box results in a dirty box much more quickly than cats not sharing, which can lead to one or more of your cats looking elsewhere to eliminate.
- Best practice is one box per cat, plus one since cats generally do not want to share.
- In a multi-pet home, the chance of play attacks or serious bullying can be present which can lead to one cat developing a fear of using the box or one cat not allowing the other cat to use the box.

### **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL**

- General rule is the litter box should be one and a half times the length of your cat- if you are unsure, pick the largest box available.
- The litter box your kitten used ceases to be appropriate once he outgrows his kitten size.
- A cat needs room to turn around and dig/bury which can be difficult in a box that is too small and may result in accidents outside of the box.
- Young kittens and older cats are not always able to get into high sided or tall litter boxes.
- Puppy/dog litter pans or regular litter box with an opening cut into the side can make all the difference to a cat who is unable to access the litter box due to medical reasons.

### **ADDITIVES**

- Scented litter is designed to appease the human sense of smell, not a feline, which is much more sensitive- thus making scented litter off-putting for many cats.
- Cat claws can get snagged in plastic litter liners and can frighten cats or begin a negative association with the litter box itself – tears in the liner due to snagged claws can also result in dirty litter getting underneath the liner, leaving an unpleasant odor and feeling of uncleanness for the cat.
- Declawed and older cats often have sensitivity issues with their paws and many litters can be uncomfortable to them- opt for the softest you can find.
- A sudden change can cause stress to your cat, which can lead to not using the litter box- stick with the same litter and make any changes as gradually as possible.