

LITTER BOX AVOIDANCE



MEDICAL RELATED

ALWAYS assume health is the issue until a vet rules out culprits like infection, crystals, stones, cystitis, constipation, kidney disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, arthritis, cancer, anal gland issues, etc. It's better to rule out medical conditions only to find out it's actually behavioral, rather than waste time on behavioral options while health worsens!

Signs it could be medical:

- Sudden onset
- Increased vocalization, sleep, clinginess, genital or belly grooming, irritability, etc.
- Straining or crying in the box
- Decreased play, appetite, socialization, tolerance, etc.
- Frequent box visits, esp little to no output
- Large puddles or stools may indicate pain
- Eliminations on soft surfaces, such as rugs, laundry, human or pet beds, etc.
- More common in older, declawed or immune compromised cats but can impact ANY age, sex, or breed

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve urinary health by increasing water intake via canned food, multiple water sources, and fountains
- Reduce pain by providing boxes with low entry points, in easy to access locations, and with medication



BOX RECOMMENDATIONS

- Scoop at least daily
- Empty, wash, refill boxes weekly
- Most cats hate automatic boxes, others prefer the cleanliness
- Many cats hate covered boxes, other prefer the privacy
- Avoid too small, far away, or hard to get inside boxes
- General rule: one more box than total cats, but most cats need more
- Place in multiple locations, rather than lined up together, which is basically one giant box to cats
- Place away from food, water, rest spots, high traffic areas
- Place away from potentially scary things like kids, dogs, appliances, etc.
- Offer a "buffet" of litter textures to test preference, small grains may softer
- Clumping is recommended, but not all cats agree. Long-hairs often gets clumps
- Avoid scented litter, box liners, or spraying air fresheners

BOX RELATED

Many cats *tolerate* their box but don't enjoy it. Cleanliness, litter texture, box style or location are the most common factors. One size does not fit all, so what works for one might not work for another.

Signs it could be the box:

- Eliminations near the box
- Large volumes or constipation (from 'holding it')
- Avoids standing on litter, digging, spending time in box
- Seems to come and go, worsens when stressed, cat is upset by small changes

