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CORRECTING HOUSE-SOILING

Usually in cases of housetraining problems with cats or kittens, there was something neglected in the social and dietary management aspects of pet care.

FOLLOW THESE SUGGESTIONS:

Do not leave food out all the time.

Feed twice daily to allow supervision afterward for at least one hour. This gives the opportunity to guide the cat to the litter box.

Litter boxes should be cleaned daily and refreshed with new litter at least once each week.

Use generic cat litter (auto supply stores can supply material used in auto repair shops to soak up oil--this is the same thing as generic cat litter) and **totally empties it daily**. We can supply an **odor neutralizer** to lightly spray on the litter to control odor. This will give you a very economical alternative to high-priced commercial cat litter. Litter boxes must be large enough to allow several eliminations without the pet having to step on a previously used spot. Be sure to supply more than one litter box if you own several cats.

Plan a 5-minute play session with the cat in the morning and at night.

Prolonged stroking can lead to problems.

Stroking should be limited to no longer than a couple of minutes, after which the pet should be encouraged to play with a toy.

In the event that spraying has followed an invasion of the cats territory by a new baby, guest, new pet, etc., more upbeat, playful attention should be given the cat at times when the invader first enters the cat's area. This helps associate the target of jealousy with pleasure, rather than social neglect.

If the cat sprays in your presence, try triggering a startling reflex of other than human origin.

This might be dropping a pot or slapping a table with your hand or ruler. This sudden noise should stop the urination allowing you to take the cat to the litter box. It is often necessary to remain there with the cat until the proper duties are performed and then be sure to praise the cat lavishly.

Cleaning up soiled spots should be done while the cat is placed in another room. We have an odor neutralizer that will remove the odor, not just cover it up. Remember also that many cleaners contain ammonia--which is a normal constituent of urine. That only makes matters worse. One teaspoon of apple cider vinegar put into one feeding each day will help alter the urine odor possibly preventing the desire to mark an area again.

Start feeding the cat at the location of the soiling. Leave the food dish, even though empty, down at the spot until the next meal. If several areas are soiled, split the feeding into however many dishes are required to cover the areas. One owner required 15 dishes before the problem was resolved. Bowls may start to be removed slowly after a minimum of four days without soiling. If regression occurs, you must reinstate feeding in each spot until another dry spell is accomplished. This program is usually successful in six weeks or less.

Be sure to spay or neuter.