

Litter Box Troubleshooting Checklist

A cat going outside the box is telling you something about health, the box set-up, or stress. **See your vet first to rule out a medical cause, then work through the set-up below.** Never punish: it adds stress and can make it worse.

FILLABLE PDF – TYPE ON A COMPUTER OR TABLET, OR PRINT AND FILL IT IN BY HAND.

CAT'S NAME

VET PHONE

PROBLEM STARTED

Emergency: repeated trips to the box with little or no urine, especially in a male cat, can mean a blocked urethra. Death can follow a complete blockage in 24–48 hours. **Go to a vet now.**

CHECK THE SET-UP

- ☐ **Enough boxes:** two for one cat, in separate places, and at least one on every floor
- ☐ **Open, not covered,** where possible; small covered boxes are hard for big cats
- ☐ **No liners, grills or scented powders**
- ☐ **Food and water** well away from the boxes
- ☐ **Big enough:** about 1.5 times your cat's length, nose to base of tail
- ☐ **Litter:** fine, unscented, clumping, at least 3 cm (1.25 in) deep
- ☐ **Scooped at least daily;** washed every 1–4 weeks with soap and hot water, never ammonia
- ☐ **Easy to step into** for older cats (low sides or a cut-out entry); once a spot works, keep it 2+ weeks

WHAT YOUR VET MAY LOOK FOR

Spraying or peeing?

Spraying: tail up and twitching, small amounts on walls or furniture, and the box is often still used. Neutering greatly reduces it.

Medical causes

Bladder infection or stones, idiopathic cystitis, kidney disease, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, arthritis, parasites, constipation or diarrhea.

Higher bladder risk

Middle age, overweight, little exercise, indoor litter use, low water intake and stress.

Call your vet

Painful or frequent peeing, blood in the urine, less urine or an odd color or smell, painful or bloody stools.

ACCIDENT LOG

DATE	WHERE	PEE / POOP / SPRAY	WHAT CHANGED RECENTLY	NOTES

THE FULL VERSION: CAT LITTER BOX SOLUTIONS GUIDE · ON ETSY: [NEWDOGCO.ETSY.COM](https://www.newdogco.etsy.com)

Sources: ISFM/AAFP consensus guidelines on house-soiling; Cornell Feline Health Center (feline lower urinary tract disease; senior cats). "One box per cat plus one" is an older rule of thumb; the current guidelines suggest two boxes even for one cat.