Litter Box Guide: *It's Not Just Common Sense*

How to prevent problems and create the best home for your cat by providing the optimal litter box situation.

Cats are territorial, and they also like a large, clean litter box. In order to accommodate this, make sure you have **one for each cat in your household, plus one extra**. For example, if you have three cats, you'll need a minimum of four litter boxes. This prevents territory disputes and allows cats access to a clean litter box at all times. Even a single cat needs two litter boxes, unless you are cleaning the litter box multiple times a day.

An adequate toilet (litter box) is:

- **Large:** 1.5 times the length of your cat from nose to base of their tail.
    - It can be hard to find a retail litter box this size. Try using a plastic tote box with an entrance cut in the side instead of a retail litter box.
    - At a minimum, the litter box should be large enough for your cat to stand up (on all fours) and turn around completely in.
- **Clean:** The litter box should be cleaned (all clumps removed) at least once daily.
    - Most cats will avoid using a dirty litter box in favor of a cleaner place. That "cleaner place" may turn out to be your carpet or bed. To prevent inappropriate elimination outside of the litter box, keep the box clean.
- **High sided**
- **Large, easy entrance:** Big enough for your cat to easily walk into, low enough lip for senior cats to get into, and not something they have to jump into and out of.
- **Multiple separated boxes:** Multiple boxes next to each other is considered "one box" by cats - put them in different rooms and on different levels of the house.

Cats have a strong preference for certain types of litter. Ideally, the litter substrate should be:

- **Clay-based**
- **Medium to fine texture**
- **Clumping** (finer texture and allows all waste products to be removed regularly)
- **Unscented** (if the litter box is kept clean, bad odor should not be an issue and won't need to be masked by artificial scent)
- **No tray liners**

Covered or uncovered?

- Cats may have a preference for covered vs uncovered, depending on what they were exposed to as a kitten.
- Remember that covered litter boxes will concentrate odors more than uncovered boxes, so they need to be kept very clean.

Figuring out a cat's litter box preference?

- Cats form a preference for litter substrate as a kitten. To figure out their preference, set up several boxes with different litter types. This allows the cat to choose and they're clearly stating their preference so you can oblige them in the future.
- Once you find a litter that your cat likes, don't change types or brands if you can help it. If you need to make a change the cat should be offered the new litter in a litter box placed next to the old box and litter.

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