

# Spraying

## What is it?

Spraying, otherwise known as marking, is the term used to describe your cat urinating small amounts in abnormal areas or on objects. It is not the same as 'inappropriate urination', which is when your cat urinates a fuller amount outside of their usual spot.

## Differentiating between spraying and inappropriate urination:

- Spraying usually happens on vertical surfaces (e.g. walls and furniture) and usually involve your cat standing with their back to the vertical surfaces and holding their tail straight up
- Inappropriate urination usually happens on horizontal surfaces (e.g. Floors, bedding, and laundry). It usually involves your cat posturing as usual for urination
- Your cat may curl their upper lip back to expose their front teeth and inhaling with their nostrils closed, this is called a 'flehmen response'
- Cats who spray usually still use their litter box for both urinating and defecating



## Why is my cat spraying?

- Marking territory – It could be that your cat is marking its territory. This is more common if another cat is intruding in their space
- Change – Cats, like many people, are creatures of habit so, any change in their lives (whether it be location or routine) can cause them to feel uneasy
- Conflict – In multi-cat households, it is a way for cats to set boundaries and establish pecking orders
- Mating – Both male and female cats spray but, it is most common in entire males as a way to make their presence known

### How do I know if my cat is stressed?

Cats are independent creatures and it can often be difficult to identify signs of stress. Signs to look out for include your cat becoming more withdrawn or less tolerant of people, changes in appetite, sleep disturbances, extreme vigilance or being easily startled.

### How to stop your cat from spraying?

The first step is to determine whether your cat is spraying or urinating inappropriately. If necessary, further tests may be needed to determine if any underlying issues are present including, but not limited to, urinary tract infections or kidney diseases.

If there is no indication for further testing, the next step would be to get your cat neutered if not already done.



Further steps include thoroughly cleaning their environment to remove any scent of cat urine.

The use of calming pheromones can be utilised to reduce your cats stress levels.

In a multi-cat household it is recommended to have one more litter box and water bowl than the number of cats in the house. For example, in a household with three cats the recommendation is four litter trays and water bowls distributed through the house.

If there is another cat intruding your cat's space, it is helpful to try and keep the scent as far away as possible. This can be challenging but a start would be by keeping wandering cats from your yard.

Enrichment, both physical and mental, is an essential part of improving your cat's well-being and reducing their stress levels. Encouraging a more active lifestyle and introducing interactive toys is a good way to keep them busy.



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**If you are worried about your cat spraying, or want to discuss treatment options, give us a call to make an appointment.**