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INAPPROPRIATE URINATION

Before you try to alter the cat's behavior, it is imperative that you rule out a medical problem as a possible cause of the cat's poor litter box etiquette. Despite the fact that cats are known for their fastidious eliminative behavior, urine marking and inappropriate elimination are very common behavioral problems. Inappropriate urination should be distinguished from urine marking. Urine marking is a form of communication; there are two different postures of urine marking, spraying and squatting. Urine spraying is done with a standing posture, hind legs straight, tail up and quivering while the cat alternately steps with the back legs. Urine is sprayed on vertical objects (look for it above the baseboard). The litterbox is still used for excretory urination and defecation. An important cause of urine marking is an increase in anxiety or nervousness. The cat sprays in the house because the scent of his own urine makes him feel more self-assured and comfortable. Often there are provoking stimuli such as interactions with other cats. The target object is smelled first. Squatting urine marking is done on a horizontal surface has the same context as spraying; common targets are the owner's bedding or clothing.

In appropriate elimination, the cat changes its toilet area to another part (or parts) of the house. The problem may be with urine, feces or both. The following table may be useful in differentiation of inappropriate urination from urine marking.

DIFFERENTIATING INAPPROPRIATE URINATION FROM URINE MARKING		
	Inappropriate Urination	Urine Marking
Litterbox usage	Usually stops using box	Continues to use litterbox for normal urination
Target areas	Suitable texture such as carpet	Target areas have behavioral significance such as smell of owner
Defecation behavior	Often accompanied by inappropriate defecation	Defecation behavior remains normal
Preliminary signs	Signs of aversion to box such as straddling box, shaking paws	Preceded by provoking stimuli such as new cats or house