

## Houstraining a Cat

- Most kittens will naturally take to a litter box. Place a litter box in a quiet area of your home where your kitten can have privacy. (\*A laundry room can often be very noisy and scary if the washer is out of balance.) Make sure the box is easily accessible and the sides are low enough for your kitten to climb in and out of the box. The best litter is one closest to natural sand. A clumping non-deodorant litter is best. If you already have a cat, provide an additional box for each new cat plus one extra. If you see your kitten sniffing around bring him to the box and praise any scratching in the box and give a treat for eliminating. When unable to watch your kitten, confine him or her in a room with a litter box.
- Scoop the box at least once daily. Once weekly completely clean the box using soap and water.
- After the kitten successfully uses the box avoid making any sudden changes. If you want to change the type of litter, place another litter box with the new litter in a new location, not taking away the old litter, until your kitten/cat is using the new type regularly.
- If you need to keep your kitten's box away from children or dogs, use a baby gate or a kitty door to prevent access to the litter box. Never punish your kitten for making a mess outside the box. If your kitten has more urine or stool accidents outside the box then call the hospital for what may be happening.
- Urine spraying sometimes occurs when kitten's mature as a type of territorial marking. Neutering pets at 6-9 months of age usually prevents most spraying, but if the problem persists, seek advice from your vet.
- Kittens are creatures of habits so when you find something that works, stick with it.

### The Ins and Outs of Litter boxes

Not using the litter box is a common complaint by some feline owners. If just starting out with your first kitten or if you have had cats for a while, here are a few guidelines to help prevent elimination problems from developing.

- Have one litter box per cat in the house plus one extra.
- Multiple litter boxes should not all be located in the same place. If more than one level in the home, have boxes on each level.
- Be careful not to place boxes near noisy appliances that may scare the pet while using it.
- Try a covered/hooded and uncovered boxes. Some cats like privacy.
- Litter should be as close to sand as possible (the natural choice for most cats). Many clumping litters are very similar.
- Non-deodorant litters are best since some cats are bothered by the deodorant smell.
- Cleanliness is very important to most cats. Scoop out the box daily and completely wash the box weekly with a mild soap and water. \*Strong cleaners can deter cats from using the box as well.
- If you notice your cat starting to have accidents outside the litter box then consult with us at the hospital right away. There may be medical issues causing it. If the pet has not been using the litter box for years, consider a behavior consult with us.