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Chaos-Central or Is My Cat Sick?

Thu, 2011-10-13 16:18 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[1]

I can't believe it's been over a month since Bob passed away. It was a tough time-between losing him, then losing three neonatal kittens who were rescued in honor of Bob-it just felt like too much. I got a very bad chest cold and have been sick for four weeks. **It's finally passing, but something else is going on in my home that's added to the feeling of chaos.**

The heirarchy between the cats has shifted. Clearly there are power struggles going on. Cats who have regularly been a "problem" are fighting with newcomers. **The result are urine puddles and poop piles that aren't in the litter pan.**

I get it. I really do. **Not only is Bob gone, but we're test driving Doodlebug to see if he can live harmoniously with the other cats.** Mazie, who I rescued just about a YEAR ago, STILL LIVES HERE. She's become more bold and brazen. She's staking out some territory, too.

It's easy to shake a finger and tell me to not have the cats, but I see Mazie as transient and overall she's a very good cat. The problems I see are with Blitzen, Nicky and Petunia. The others manage okay and they don't spray or mark the house.

The biggest culprit is Nicky. He will literally pee on the floor right in front of me. When this 19+ pound cat lets go, a lake forms below him. He also poops by the doorways, usually one of the first things I see in the morning.

In sorting out what to do, **I have to remember that Nicky could be sick.** Nicky could be upset that Petunia is asserting herself more than ever now that Bob, her arch enemy is gone. To rule out illness, **Nicky went to visit Dr. Larry today.**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Nicky, "Mr. Lovey-Dovey" at the Vet with Sam giving him a belly rub.

Nicky has lost over a pound in the past year, which is good, unless it's a trend downward from illness. He has one tooth that might be painful so he'll need a dental. Dr Larry did some blood work and a urinalysis-the results come in tomorrow. We discussed Nicky's water intake, which has noticeably increased over the past few months. **This could mean diabetes (which I doubt since I did tested him a few weeks ago and he was normal), hyperthyroid (common in older cats and Nicky is 11) or renal failure (which we hope that's not what it is). ANY of these things, including his painful tooth, could be causing him to eliminate outside the box.**

Then Dr. Larry asked me how many litter pans we had. I answered that we have three that are enormous. He seemed surprised, then said that we need a lot more. I questioned him about it because with the cats on a raw diet they don't fill up the pans and we keep scooping them at least once if not more times a day. He told me about a client who has TWO cats. She has one of those perfectly clean homes. She worked long hours and came home and found pee all over the place. **To solve the problem, she ended up buying a kiddie pool (!!!), then placing SIX cat litter pans INSIDE the pool with fresh litter.**

The inappropriate peeing stopped.

Each of the litter pans was used over the course of the day. There might be something to this after all. Our problem is that our

house is a contemporary and all the rooms are open to each other. **We don't have a lot of room for litter pans, but we will MAKE SOME ROOM**, that's for sure. Tonight we're going out to buy some new pans. We'll see if that makes a dent in it.

The peeing problem is quite bad. It seems every day I find another place they were peeing on. **We're trying all sorts of tricks and behavior modification and we've seen a reduction to not happening at all for the pooping, but the peeing..ugh...what IS IT WITH CATS?** I am honestly trying to understand what they need and to give each one love and attention. I'm failing. I have to fix this.

Then there's Gracie.

Gracie is a sweet cat. She hardly has a mean bone in her body. Gracie was one of my first foster cats about 8 years ago. She was an "unwed" Mother to three kittens. Gracie's had Miliary Dermatitis for three years. I've done every test, treatment, seen every specialist I can and so far all I know is she seems sensitive to fish and homeopathy helped her stop being so painfully shy. I also think this may be the path to helping Gracie's skin now that we have her in a more calm frame of mind. You can read more about Gracie by doing a search on GRACIE in the sidebar. A few posts about her are [HERE](#) ^[2] and [HERE](#) ^[3].



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracie hiding under the towel. Maybe Dr. Larry won't see her?

A few nights ago I was petting Gracie. She's so jumpy I don't often get to pet more than her head, but this time she let me pet her belly. **Right away my fingers detected something not right-a mass on her abdomen.** It felt like an M&M.

Sam and I took her into the bathroom and tried to clip the fur away from her belly but we couldn't see much. This morning Dr. Larry got out the clippers and shaved her belly.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. The cyst is the blue thing. The scabs are scabs from her dermatitis (looks worse than it really is).

Before he shaved Gracie he felt the cyst. He had a grave look on his face that told me everything. I started to think..."Oh no..not cancer again..we just went through this with Bob...I have no resources if she's that sick." Dr. Larry explained why it didn't feel like just a simple cyst; that he couldn't get under it and the texture didn't feel right.

After he shaved Gracie he didn't look so grim. **What appeared to me like a freakish blueberry, Dr. Larry thought might be, I will paraphrase, a pore, perhaps there's ingrown fur in the growth and basically it's like a big zit?** I'm to put warm compresses on the thing for the next few days and see if I can encourage it to drain (pop). Weeee! Fun! **Almost as good as when Dr. Larry offered to let me express Bob's anal glands.**

It could still be cancer. We're not out of the woods. If I can't get it to drain, then he will excise it. Gracie needs a dental, too, so he'll do both. We discussed that 3 years ago when she had her last dental, that she got this rash afterwards. He's going to sedate her differently so perhaps she will be less stressed. I know he'll go as easy on her as possible. It just seems as though her skin breaks out when she is highly stressed. I should have named her, Nervous Nelly.

As we struggle to cope with missing Bob and struggle to sort out what's going on with the remaining cats, I know that in time we'll have some answers. I just hope I'm okay with what I find out.

Comments

Mon, 2011-10-17 20:10 — Rachel Shubin (not verified)

Sorry and litter boxes

Hi Robin,

Sorry it sounds like you can't catch a break with your cats. I hope everything turns out all right. We have 6 litterboxes downstairs, that 5 of our 7 have access too. And yet we still have a kitty who will blatantly pee on the floor. Sometimes she even "sprays" and lifts up her body while she is peeing and it goes over the box. The vet says she is extremely healthy. I think it's just one of those things that cats do.

Sat, 2011-10-15 00:29 — Catkeypurr (not verified)

litterboxes

Unfortunately, when you choose to have a lot of cats, it means a lot of litterboxes, too. I have a small house & a lot of cats (all strictly indoors). When I had a severely handicapped cat I even had a box in the corner of the living room. I still have boxes in my bedroom. I'd rather deal with the boxes than the result of not having enough!

Not only do you need a LOT more boxes, you need to avoid scented litter, offer several types of boxes & several types of litter. I have the old fashioned, non clumping stuff in the basement boxes & scoopable upstairs & it all gets used. You also have to actually scoop at least twice a day rather than just intending to do so ;)

Personally, I'm tired of all the boxes everywhere. Once my cats are mine, they are mine forever but I have chosen not to add anymore as I lose them to old age. One of these days I'll have two cats & two boxes in the basement & won't have to sleep with the litter that gets tracked into my bed.

PS. It's time to quit treating/ thinking of Gracie as a foster. You might be surprised at how fast her skin clears up once she realizes she is home to stay (& she is after all that time!).

Fri, 2011-10-14 13:19 — Robin Olson

OMG & LOL!!!

I want to HUG ALL OF YOU!!!!!! Thank you for the comments. Yes, I know the rule about 1 cat per box but we have no room for that many boxes. At this point we might as well just turn the house into a litter pan!!!! Home Depot is our next stop. Got some more giant pans at Target last night, too. We'll see how it goes. We're trying homeopathy, too..and trying not to get mad at the cats. Not easy...I'm sorry many of you are struggling, too. Maybe by coming together here we can share info and figure this out so we can help everyone solve this dastardly problem! So very vexing!!!

Fri, 2011-10-14 12:20 — MK (not verified)

my crazy cat

I have 6 cats..10 litterboxes..(4 in the garage..no cars, just cat stuff)..8 are the big storage bins..2 have different litter in them..they are all scooped 3-4 times a day..and one of my cats still pees outside the box. Nothing is wrong with her (medically!). Sometimes she pees in an empty extra box in the garage, which is fine. It is crazy. I don't know what else she wants me to do for her.

Fri, 2011-10-14 11:46 — Lorraine (not verified)

litter box

We use a black PVC plastic thing that is made for mixing mortar or cement - much bigger than the biggest litter box - 24x36 - and has high sides, very durable and easy to scoop. Home Depot - less than \$15. Just make sure you get the smooth interior without ridges. Good Luck

Fri, 2011-10-14 09:40 — Catnymouse (not verified)

At our clinic we recommend at

At our clinic we recommend at least one pan per cat, I don't think is it a size thing necessarily.

Good luck.

Fri, 2011-10-14 02:14 — Lizzie (not verified)

Litter Pans and Cat Numbers

Hi Robin, sorry you're having more problems with the pee/poop issues. I guess they are all a bit stressed, since the balance has shifted so quickly - the loss of Bob and the addition of such a livewire as the Dood, both pretty much at once. I had a great book (I prob. still do... if I can find it... loft? hmmm), called "Cat Detective", by Vicky Halls, an animal behaviourist/psychologist, specialising in cats. The book is kind-of a self-help guide to working out your cat. Anyway, I found it very helpful with a troublesome rescue we had. Vicky Halls' view on litter pans (as part of the pee/poop problems issue), was that you need one litter pan per cat, plus one - as a minimum. She also suggested placing one at a spot where a cat kept urinating, to get the message across that the pan was the right place to pee... I know you're more experienced with cats than me, but I thought it might be a helpful idea anyway. I guess that was where Dr. Larry was coming from too. A bit tricky though, when you're pushed for space. I reckon you should go to the scrapyard and find a caravan, then attach it to the porch/roof, as a Cat House... They can all go live there and your house will be fine again!! Good luck with sorting out the problems!

Fri, 2011-10-14 00:51 — Stephanie (not verified)

I've always been told a pan

I've always been told a pan for each cat +1.. Which in your case may lead to ridiculousness. But I think more, even though you have big ones and they eat grain-free, could really be useful. Glad to hear you'll give it a try! Let us know how it goes.

Thu, 2011-10-13 22:32 — Lita (not verified)

Hi, I have 3 cats and 5

Hi,
I have 3 cats and 5 litter trays. My cats are on a raw diet also and eliminate much less than commercially fed cats but I think they need more littler options than one each. You could give Gracie homeopathic Silica to help her cyst/pore drain. My cat Niles had a blocked pore on the back of his neck, it annoyed me FAR more than it did him, but silica did dry it out and cause it to fall off...My Niles passed in May, I think he had what your Bob had but I didn't let him go that long, he'd lost half his body weight when I helped him go. Breaks your heart, I know. Hm...what about flower essences in the cats' water? Or rescue remedy?

Thu, 2011-10-13 19:38 — acninee

Litter Pans

2 Indoor cats, 3 indoor-outdoor. 2 pans and one of the indoor cats peeing under my desk. Ok, I can fix this! New litter box under the desk and the little girl will use that one and we'll be good, right ?!
Well... sort of.. no one is missing the pan. But 5 cats are using it. It has to be cleaned twice daily. And no cats use the other 2 pans at all.

Thu, 2011-10-13 18:11 — Penny (not verified)

cat boxes

Hi Robin,
Why does it seem that kitty troubles come in groups? Right after my 15-y-o Tomato was diagnosed with failing kidneys, the two girls needed dental work!
In addition to the kidney issue, Tommy was hospitalized for urinary problems ten years ago. He is (so far!) the only box-misser. When I discovered someone was using the sump pump cover (!), impossible to clean thoroughly, I put litter box on it! That worked - for a while.
There were two boxes in "the alcove" and one more on the pump for the two cats. Following a summer of TNR, fostering & taming kittens for adoption, two more cats joined our happy home! Oops!
A "mystery-pooper" started using our basement stairwell. It took a while for me to discover the out-door deposits, but someone inside was "answering"! Now I knew why someone was going by the door!
I now have two boxes in the "kitten room" - the two-year-olds are locked up over-night in a spare bedroom. Four litter boxes are in the basement (we have a fairly large two-story house), two in "the alcove", two by the door. I have a washer pan (the white plastic thing that goes under a laundry "upstairs") under each set of two litter pans. Adding the washer pans really helped, and they catch some of the escaping litter. GOOD LUCK!

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