



October 2017

Feline Health Month



FELINE HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR

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When cat owners come in with behavior problems, solving them can be difficult. Each cat is an individual, and what prompts a behavior in one may not be an issue in other cats. There also may be a combination of factors that influence their cat to "act out." We know there could be a wide range of factors to try and narrow down what's going on and figure out solutions. H.I.S.S. is an acronym to categorize all the different issues that might be involved. H.I.S.S. stands for health, instinct, stress, and symptoms, signs and solutions.

H=Health

EXAMPLE: a top behavior complaint involves missing the litter box. But diabetes and kidney failure can make a cat need to urinate more often. Urinary tract pain caused by inflammation (cystitis) is another common cause of urinating outside the box. Arthritis can also be the culprit.

I=Instinct

Many of the behaviors people complain about have nothing to do with kitty being "bad" or acting in a vindictive manner. Instead, the cat behaves as he's pre-programmed to do, and no amount of "re-training" will change this natural, normal behavior.

For instance, cats claw to mark territory, and because it's a health issue that keeps their nails sharp and muscles toned. Cats climb on furniture to

seek out high lookouts and safe places to rest, just as their predator ancestors might do. Kitties prefer clean toilets and dislike "going" after other cats, and may snub the litter box if

FELINE HEALTH MONTH IS HERE!

it's not kept clean. Rather than behavior "problems" these are normal behaviors that may be re-directed or resolved simply by understanding the issue.

S=Stress

Stress can prompt all sorts of health and emotional issues that result in

changes of behavior. Do you bite your nails or tap your fingers when nervous? Stress can cause cats to act erratically, too, and the worst stress comes

from too much togetherness between cats. For instance, a cat might turn a normal behavior like self-grooming into a compulsion when stressed, because the licking helps calm him down. Because cats use scent to calm themselves, a stressed-out cat often urinates around the house, or increases scratch-behavior. Fearful cats hide or become aggressive. And when a cat cannot reach that stray cat outside the window, he may instead redirect his aggression toward an inside cat-buddy, or even the owner.

S=Symptoms, Signs & Solutions

Because cats can't speak to us, we must rely on "signs" of illness, as well as our diagnostics. Behavior changes, how long they've been going on, and the cat's environment all point to clues. Once all the clues have been gathered, solutions can be offered.

Many times, these solutions include combinations of things to treat or relieve health problems, understand and accommodate

instinct, and relieve stress.

***For additional information visit indoorcat.org**



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Clovis Pet Hospital Staff



How to Get Your Cat to the Vet

You love your cat and you want to be able to provide the best healthcare possible. But you don't want to look like you lost a fight to Edward Scissorhands. Your cat CAN learn to like her carrier which will make getting her to the vet much less of a chore. Here are some tips and recommendations on getting your cat familiar with, and even liking, her carrier.

Becoming Familiar with the Carrier

Midnight investigates her carrier.

- Make the carrier a familiar place at home by leaving it in a room where your cat spends a lot of time.
- Place familiar soft bedding inside the carrier or even clothing with familiar scents help cats feel secure.
- Try placing treats, catnip or toys in the carrier to encourage your cat to go in while at home.
- It may take days or weeks before your cat starts to trust the carrier.
- Just stay calm and patient and always reward your cat for good behavior in and around the carrier!
- If trouble persists, you may need to assess the state of the carrier itself (material, size, etc...)



Getting a Cat into a Carrier

If your cat needs to get to the vet right away and is not accustomed to the carrier, try the following:

- Start by putting the carrier in a small room with few hiding places.
- Bring the cat in and close the door.
- Make sure you move slowly and calmly. DO NOT chase the cat into the carrier, but try to encourage them with treats or get them to come to you.
- If your carrier has an opening on the top, try cradling your cat and gently lowering them into the carrier and then replacing/closing the top.
- Once again, familiar bedding in the carrier is effective in establishing familiar smells, or try a synthetic feline pheromone (such as Feliway) and spray the carrier 30 min before use



What Kind of Carrier is Best?

Our recommendation is the hard-sided carriers that can be opened from the top or the front, as well as taken apart in the middle. Avoid carriers that require the cat to be dumped or pulled out.

Getting your cat to the Veterinarian for annual visits is **crucial** to their health.

Preventative care saves lives...**PERIOD!**

