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Litter Box Tips

Boxes

- Provide one litter box for each cat in the house, plus one additional box
- Boxes should be in different locations around the house to provide multiple and different access points. In multi-level homes with multiple cats, litter boxes should be offered on each floor level
- Boxes should be easily accessible, especially for young kittens, physically disabled cats, and elderly cats
- Avoid placing boxes in high traffic zones or very remote locations
- Most cats prefer uncovered boxes
- Boxes should be large enough for the cat to comfortably move around in the box – it should be at least 1 ½ times the length of the cat. Consider getting a plastic storage container to use as a litter box if commercially available litter boxes are too small
- Since plastic can absorb and retain odor over time, boxes should be replaced annually
- Do not bother a cat when it is in the litter box as it may create an aversion to the litter box

Litter

- Most cats prefer unscented, clumping litter (e.g. Fresh Step Unscented Clay Cat Litter)
- Offer enough litter so that the cat can dig/cover adequately (at least an inch in depth)
- Plastic litter liners may be aversive to some cats
- Some cats have unusual litter preferences. To test a specific cat's preference, a variety of litters can be offered simultaneously before retaining the preferred type

Cleaning

- Most cats prefer a pristine litter box
- Boxes must be scooped at least once daily, though more frequently is preferred
- Boxes should be completely changed with a box washing on a regular basis. This may vary from weekly to monthly depending on litter type, cat's hygienic standards, and box usage.
 - Old litter should be dumped, the box washed with liquid soap and water, rinsed thoroughly with water, and filled with new litter. Avoid using harsh chemicals when cleaning as these may repel the cats from the box.
- If a box needs extensive soaking/chemical treatment to clear the odor, then it is time to purchase a new box.

Source: Written by Veterinary Behaviorists; Dr. Horwitz and Dr. Nelson