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HIGHLIGHTS

- Loudoun Cat Care purchases a surgical laser
- Cats like clean, open litter boxes in easily accessible places
- Cat Cautions
- February is Dental Month



News Prints

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Welcome to Loudoun Cat Care

Loudoun Cat Care has passed its sixth month anniversary and is growing daily. We are happy to announce our purchase of a CO2 surgical laser. A laser is used in place of a surgical blade in many surgeries, including declaws, neuters and mass removals. The

laser cauterizes the nerve endings and the blood vessels up to a certain diameter, which makes the surgical procedure less painful and less bloody.

Our picture scrapbook is finally started and we are looking for pictures of your cats to

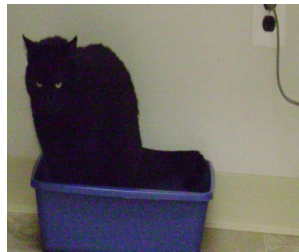
add to our book. You can drop them off when you are in next, or mail them to us. We love to see every cat's purr-sonality come out for the camera.

-Dr. Wiechmann

Environmental Enrichment

This month's education topic is inappropriate urination. Cats will urinate out of their litter box for many reasons both medical and behavioral. Medical causes include infection, idiopathic/inflammatory cystitis, and crystals or bladder stones. Certain diseases cause cats to drink more and urinate more which can also result in cats not using their litter boxes appropriately. And finally there is the issue of a behavior problem. We can not tell the difference between a medical and a behavioral issue without looking at a urine sample and seeing the offending cat for a physical exam. During the exam, we look for physical problems such as infection and inflammation of the perineum, metabolic disorders and arthritis.

A thorough history will be taken to help us learn about litter box placement, litter box cleaning routines, where the cat is going, how frequently and whether or not the cat is urinating on vertical or horizontal surfaces.



This information paired with the urinalysis results and the physical exam allows us to make recommendations and treatment plans to resolve the inappropriate urination problem.

Most young cats do not have a lot of urinary tract infections. They can have infections of the perineum, the area around the cat's genitalia, that result in irritation when voiding. Many times these cats are overweight and can not reach around to clean themselves appropriately. In these cases, weight loss, cleaning with baby wipes, sanitary shaving of the area, and topical or oral antibiotics are often needed. Many cats will resume using the litter box once the discomfort of the infection is resolved.

Older, more arthritic cats may have a hard time climbing in and out of a high sided litter box or have a tough time posturing in box when there are many inches of litter to stand on. (continued on back)

Cat Cautions



With the approaching celebrations of Valentine’s Day and Easter, we need to take caution in regards to our feline companions with two common gifts received during those times: chocolate and Easter lilies. Let’s face it—we all love chocolate. But for our cats, this tasty treat can be poisonous.

Even though all chocolate can be toxic, semi-sweet chips and baking chocolate are some of the more deadly forms of chocolate if ingested. Chocolate contains a chemical called theobromine which is a diuretic and cardiac stimulant. This can cause irregular heart beat and increased heart rate. It can cause your cat to vomit and have diarrhea. The most critical problem is that it can act on the nervous system causing convulsions, seizures and even death. If you find that your cat has ingested some form of chocolate, please call for advice on how to treat your cat.

In regards to lilies, the dangerous part is mainly the leaves, but the flowers and stems may also be toxic. Within an hour or so after ingesting a piece of a lily, the cat begins to vomit. Within 12 hours, the cat becomes depressed as the toxin begin to affect the kidneys. Within 48 to 96 hours after consumption, the cat will tend to show signs of clinical kidney failure: depression, increased urination, upset stomach, and dehydration. If your cat is seen eating a lily, immediately call for medical advice. If treatment is begun within six hours after consumption, the prognosis is high the cat will recover.

Although lilies are a popular gift, please exercise extreme caution when bringing this plant into your home. They may best be admired from your church pew.

For February and March we are offering 10% off the price of a dental cleaning and dental x-rays. Call for details.

February is National Dental Month

The AVMA has designated February as National Dental Month in order to promote awareness of dental disease in animals. Just like humans, cats are prone to “cavities”, gingivitis, tartar and bad breath. Dental disease can lead to infection of the heart valves, the liver, and the kidneys.

Here are some pointers to keep your cats mouth healthy:

- Do daily teeth cleaning with a warm, wet washcloth. Rub the teeth and gums gently. When the cat learns to tolerate this, add in one of the oral rinses like CET rinse or Maxi-guard.
- If you can not do a daily cleaning, then use CET chews twice daily to help keep down the tartar.
- Have yearly oral exams performed by your veterinarian.
- Do routine dentals, as recommended by your veterinarian. This provides a thorough oral exam, ultrasonic cleaning, tooth polishing and a fluoride treatment.
- Remember that the crowns are only the visible half of a tooth. Dental x-rays are needed to see the roots and any “cavities” or abscesses that affect the roots.

Continued from front...

Using a lower sided box or even a baking sheet, with less cat litter may make a big difference for this kind of problem. Also consider the location of the litter box and try to have one on each level that the cat spends time so that it does not have to climb stairs with stiff, sore joints just to use the litter box. Litter box cleanliness is very important. Ideally the box should be scooped daily and

dumped weekly, with a good scrubbing to remove residual odors. Many cats do not like boxes with a lid on them; think of it like a porta-potty and you will understand why. Some cats even have a preference for clay versus clumping litter based on how it feels under their feet. Each cat is different and it may take trying a few litters to figure out which one your cat prefers. Leading feline behaviorists say

that there should be a litter box per cat plus one extra. This helps with territorial spats, allowing less dominant cats a place to potty without being bullied. Remember that an inappropriate urinary issue can have many sides and that by working with your veterinarian it can get better.