

Litter Tray Hygiene

Litter trays are accepted as a means of toilet training your kitten or new cat in the home, however there are some things you should be aware of to prevent litter trays from becoming hygiene hazards.

- Keep the litter tray or trays in the same place or places in the home at all times. Your kitten or new cat needs to be shown and understand where they need to do their business, so this will become a habit. It's a good idea to keep a non-slip, washable mat underneath the tray, so that any spilt litter doesn't get trailed around the home.
- Change the litter regularly and keep the tray clean. Litter trays can host a lot of nasty bacteria and parasites, so for this reason any waste should be removed from the tray at every possible opportunity. Cats are clean creatures and if their tray is dirty they will choose other places to go to the toilet. Oriental and Siamese cats are particularly fussy about their toileting habits and only want to 'go' if the litter tray is cleaned to their high standards.
- Wash your hands after cleaning the tray. It's important to note that pregnant women shouldn't change cat litter without wearing rubber gloves, and children should always be discouraged from handling litter.
- Reduce unpleasant smells. Apart from ensuring that you undertake frequent litter disposal, keep the area well ventilated. Air fresheners can irritate your cat's respiratory system and cause breathing problems. Spray air fresheners can scare cats because they sound like another cat hissing.

Types of trays and litter vary, so do your research or ask your vet or retailer which is the best for your cat. There are models with a hooded lid that prevent excess mess caused by your cats natural instinct to tread its litter, and a hooded litter tray provides your cat with a safe and secure place to use the toilet, and provides privacy. However the hood also retains odors and may discourage cats from entering the tray to use it. Litter trays with wide internal lips can be effective at containing litter but older cats can struggle to cross

the wide lip.

The most advanced and convenient design of litter trays are the electronic, fully automatic types. These use crystal-infused litter to absorb urine and senses when your cat has used it. Then, a stainless steel scoop sweeps the waste into an enclosed compartment, ensuring there is no visual mess or smell and making it easy to change and keep clean.

Whichever you decide is suitable for your cat's needs, keep a regular check on its condition and contents and this will help to keep your home fresh and clean, and your cat healthy.