

Dedicated professionals and volunteers caring for the many stray and unwanted dogs and cats of Fulton County.



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Our Mission Statement

The James A. Brennan Memorial Humane Society is a non-profit, compassionate organization devoted to securing permanent, responsible, loving homes for the animals of Fulton County. The organization strives to achieve its mission through education and prevention of animal suffering.

This shelter serves the Fulton County community in many ways:

- 1. Provides shelter, food, water, medical care and safety to stray, homeless and unwanted cats and dogs.*
- 2. Helps families find new animal companion.*
- 3. Returns lost pets to their owners.*
- 4. Teaches humane education in schools, kindness towards animals: safety around animals, the link between animal cruelty and violence against humans and builds self-confidence.*
- 5. Has the most aggressive Spay/Neuter Program for low-income families in Fulton County.*
- 6. Pet Food Bank for Seniors in Fulton County, helping seniors with financial difficulties feeding their companions.*
- 7. Girl Scouts merit badge programs.*
- 8. Alternative School Program, providing work-study opportunities for students.*
- 9. Advocates for Animal Law at the State and Federal levels.*

Perhaps most importantly the Brennan Humane Society provides a tangible example of humane ethics and compassion for all living

Submissive and Excitement Urination

With one second left in the championship game, the basketball player has to make one free throw to send the game into overtime and keep her team's hopes for victory alive. A hush comes over the arena while beads of sweat roll down her face. It's the first time she's been in this situation. She shoots the ball...and it clangs off the rim....

Just as an athlete may make a mistake when her confidence wanes in a daunting situation, so too may a dog. A dog who is threatened and lacks confidence may urinate out of submission. He may also urinate when he's being punished or verbally scolded, or when he's approached by someone he perceives to be a threat.

And just as the athlete will gain confidence as she plays in more high-pressure situations, your dog's submissive urination may resolve itself as he gains confidence. You can help to build his confidence by teaching him commands and rewarding him for obeying. You should also gradually expose him to new people and new situations and try to make sure all his new experiences are positive and happy.

Your Dog May Have a Submissive Urination Problem If:

- He urinates when he's being scolded.
- He urinates when someone approaches him.
- He urinates when he's being greeted.
- He has a history of being treated roughly or being punished long after he has displayed unwanted behaviors.
- He is a somewhat shy, anxious, or timid dog.
- He urinates while making submissive postures, such as crouching, tail tucking, or rolling over and exposing his belly.

What to Do If Your Dog Has a Submissive Urination Problem:

- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low-key.
- Encourage and reward confident postures (sitting, standing) from him.
- Give him an alternative to behaving submissively. For example, if he knows a few commands, have him "sit" or "shake" as you approach, and reward him for obeying.
- Avoid approaching him with postures that he reads as dominant. To do this:
 - Avoid direct eye contact. Look at his back or tail instead.
 - Get down on his level by bending at the knees rather than leaning over from the waist. Ask others to approach him in the same way.
 - Pet him under the chin rather than on top of the head.
 - Approach him from the side, rather than from the front, and/or present the side of your body to him, rather than your full front.
- Don't punish or scold him. This will only make the problem worse.

Excitement Urination

Excitement urination occurs most often during greetings and playtime and is not accompanied by submissive posturing. Excitement urination usually resolves on its own as a dog matures. In some cases, however, the problem can persist if the dog is frequently punished or if the dog's behavior is inadvertently reinforced—such as by petting or talking to your dog in a soothing or coddling tone of voice after he urinates when excited.

Your Dog May Have an Excitement Urination Problem If:

- He urinates when excited, such as during greetings or playtime.
- He urinates when excited and is less than one year old.

What to Do If Your Dog Has an Excitement Urination Problem:

- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- To avoid accidents, play outdoors until the problem is resolved.
- Don't punish or scold him.
- Keep greetings low-key.
- When he's excited, ignore him until he's calm.

Urine-Marking Behavior

Much like the miners during the Gold Rush, dogs and cats are territorial animals. They "stake a claim" to a particular space, area, or object. They let other people and animals know about their claim by marking it using a variety of methods at different levels of intensity. For example, a dog may bark to drive away what he perceives to be intruders in his territory. A cat may mark a valued object by rubbing her head against it. Some pets may go to the extreme of urinating or defecating to mark a particular area as their own. Urine-marking is not a house soiling problem. Instead, it is considered territorial behavior. Therefore, to resolve the problem, you need to address the underlying reason for your pet's need to mark his territory in this way. Before this can be done, however, take your pet to the veterinarian to rule out any medical causes for his behavior.

House Soiling or Urine-Marking: How to Tell the Difference

Your pet may be urine-marking if:

- The problem is primarily urination. Dogs and cats rarely mark with feces.
- The amount of urine is small and is found primarily on vertical surfaces. (Dogs and cats do sometimes mark on horizontal surfaces.) Leg-lifting and spraying are dominant versions of urine-marking, but even if your pet doesn't assume these postures, he may still be urine-marking.
- Any pet in your home is not spayed or neutered. Intact males and females are both more likely to urine-mark than are spayed or neutered animals. However, even spayed or neutered animals may mark in response to other intact animals in the home.
- Your pet urinates on new objects in the environment (a shopping bag, a visitor's purse), on objects that have unfamiliar smells, or on objects that have another animal's scent.
- Your pet has conflicts with other animals in your home. When there's instability in the pack hierarchy, a dog may feel a need to establish his dominance by urine-marking his territory. If one cat is intimidating another cat, the bullied cat may express his anxiety by urine-marking.
- Your pet has contact with other animals outside your home. A cat who is allowed outdoors may come home and mark after having an encounter with another cat outside. If your pet sees another animal through a door or window, he may feel a need to mark his territory.
- Your dog marks frequently when you walk him.

What You Can Do

- Spay or neuter your pet as soon as possible. Spaying or neutering your pet may stop urine-marking altogether. However, if he has been urine-marking for a long time, a pattern may already be established.
- Resolve conflicts between animals in your home. Restrict your pet's access to doors and windows through which he can observe animals outside. If this isn't possible, discourage the presence of other animals near your house.
- Keep your cat indoors. He'll be safer, live longer, and feel less need to mark his territory.
- Clean soiled areas thoroughly. Don't use strong-smelling cleaners because they may cause your pet to "over-mark" the spot.
- Make previously soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive. If this isn't possible, try to change the significance of those areas to your pet. Feed, treat, and play with your pet in the areas he is inclined to mark.

- Keep objects likely to cause marking out of reach. Items such as guests' belongings and new purchases should be placed in a closet or cabinet.
- If your pet is marking in response to a new resident in your home (such as a roommate or spouse), have the new resident make friends with your pet by feeding, grooming, and playing with your pet. If you have a new baby, make sure good things happen to your pet when the baby is around.
- For dogs: Watch your dog when he is indoors for signs that he is thinking about urinating. When he begins to urinate, interrupt him with a loud noise and take him outside. If he urinates outside, praise him and give him a treat. When you're unable to watch him, put your dog in confinement (a crate or small room where he has never marked) or tether him to you with a leash.
- For dogs: Practice "nothing in life is free" with your dog. This is a safe, non-confrontational way to establish your leadership and requires your dog to work for everything he wants from you. Have your dog obey at least one command (such as "sit") before you pet him, give him dinner, put on his leash, or throw him a toy. Establishing yourself as a strong leader can help stabilize the hierarchy and thus diminish your dog's need to mark his territory.
- For cats: Try to monitor your cat's movements. If he sniffs in an area he has previously marked, interrupt him with a loud noise or squirt him with water. It's best if you can do this without him seeing you. That way, he'll associate the unpleasantness with his intent to mark, rather than with you.

What *Not* to Do

Don't punish your pet after the fact. Punishment administered even a minute after the event is ineffective because your pet won't understand why he is being punished.

Pets Aren't People

Dogs and cats don't urinate or defecate out of spite or jealousy. If your dog urinates on your baby's diaper bag, it's not because he is jealous of, or dislikes, your baby. The unfamiliar scents and sounds of a new baby in the home are simply causing him to reaffirm his claim on his territory. Likewise, if your cat urinates on your new boyfriend's backpack, it does not reflect his opinion of your taste in men. Instead, he has perceived the presence of an "intruder," and is letting the intruder know that this territory belongs to him.

Dominance or Anxiety?

Urine-marking is usually associated with dominance behavior. Some pets, though, may mark when they feel anxious or upset. For example, a new baby in the home brings new sounds, smells, and people, as well as changes in routine. Your dog or cat probably isn't getting as much attention as he was used to getting. All of these changes cause him to feel anxious, which may cause him to mark.

Likewise, a pet who is generally anxious may become more so by the presence of roaming neighborhood animals in your yard, or by the introduction of a new cat or dog into your household. If your pet is feeling anxious, you might consider talking to your veterinarian about medications to reduce his anxiety while you try behavior modification techniques.