



FEATURE

6 WAYS TO STOP YOUR DOG EATING CAT POOP



Are you aware your dog indulges in coprophagia most days? But don't panic! Around 85% ¹ of dogs do. Pronounced co-pro-phay-jia; put bluntly it means eating poop; mostly cat poop! And why does your dog eat it? Because to them, it is like candy, and believe it or not; it can be packed with protein.

However, despite the potential nutritional value, it is not good to encourage this habit as it can risk harmful parasites being ingested that can cause severe illness.

But if you do have a dog committed to cleaning out the cat's litter daily, how can you stop this behaviour? PetSafe® Brand Australia has six tips that could help prevent your dog's dirty habit.

1. Train, Train, Train!

Every time you see your pup heading towards the cat litter box, firmly use a word or sentence like 'Leave It' (for example); and then remove them from the area. Alternatively, you can use a water sprayer when they are near the litter. They will quickly learn that to be in that area is not a good thing!

2. Keep the dog busy when the cat is 'occupied'

When your cat uses the kitty litter tray, distract your dog with treats or toys, so they do not focus on the cat and the smell.

3. Clean the cat's litter ASAP

Cleaning your cats' litter box regularly (ideally as soon as they have pooped) is recommended. However, if it's hard to stay on top of kitty's droppings, invest in a ScoopFree® Self-Cleaning Litter Box. This popular litter box, which uses crystal litter, is designed to automatically sweep the waste into a bin within a short time following the cat's deposit.

4. Use Crystal litter

Crystal litter is a great way to reduce litter box odours (it's five times more effective than clay or regular litter), and it dries waste quickly, buying you a little more time for cleaning.

5. Make the litter box inaccessible

Place litter boxes on a table (not necessarily the dining room table) or counter or in a small cabinet or closet with a door latch that allows it to open only wide enough for the cat. Another idea is using a baby gate or something similar. A cat can slink through the bars or leap over the barrier, whereas most dogs cannot. Some pet gates can be raised a few inches above the floor so the cat can slide underneath, or keep the litter box in a room or cabinet accessed by a specially placed pet door.

6. Get a cover for the kitty litter

Try using a covered litter box with an opening that the dog can't fit his head through. Remember, though, that covers keep smells contained and may feel like a trap to the cat, so use covered boxes with caution. The ScoopFree® Self-Cleaning Litter Box also comes with a hooded version for those cats who like their privacy.

Keep in mind, every dog is different, but every dog has his day. With some precautions, discipline, and positive reinforcement, make it the day he swears off litter critters and other stinky treats for life.

1. www.livescience.com