

# Cat Urine: The Health Risks and Hazards

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Cats can bring both joy and headaches. - DrL

*Cat urine poses many health risks.*

Cats are cute, loving and independent with a range of personalities. They quickly become more than a pet; they are part of your family. Unfortunately, having a cat means dealing with its urine. Cat urine not only is unpleasant; it also can create a health hazard with both short-term and long-term effects.

## **Why Is Cat Urine Unhealthy?**

Cat urine contains concentrated amounts of ammonia that becomes stronger over time. Ammonia is a compound made from nitrogen and hydrogen that has a pungent odor that can be difficult to remove. Typically, cat urine is not dangerous in small doses. Large quantities of urine can cause a slew of health problems for those who come in contact with it. Therefore, it is the ammonia in the cat urine that makes the urine dangerous.

## **Short-Term Effects**

The short-term effects associated with cat urine and ammonia range in symptoms from headaches and nausea to dizziness and watery eyes. These symptoms most commonly present themselves in those suffering from asthma or other respiratory problems. However, anyone who inhales cat urine is susceptible to those symptoms. The symptoms can present themselves within minutes of inhaling the cat urine. The best

way to remedy the short-term effects is to move away from the cat urine and into fresh air.

### **Long-Term Effects**

The long-term effects of cat urine are not a common occurrence. Those who are already suffering from respiratory problems and are constantly surrounded by cat urine are most susceptible to long-term effects. Usually unkempt kennel workers or those considered cat hoarders are those who suffer from long-term effects. These effects are vomiting, dizziness, respiratory infections, bronchitis, phenomena, and shortness of breath. Long-term exposure can also damage your liver, kidneys, lungs and eyes.

### **Cleaning Cat Urine**

When cleaning cat urine never use bleach. Mixing bleach with ammonia or items containing ammonia will create toxic fumes. Instead, use an all-natural cleaner and deodorizer that will neutralize the proteins in the cat urine. If the cat urine is fresh, lay several paper towels on top of the urine and absorb as much of the urine as possible. Flush the area with cool water and absorb the excess liquid with paper towels. Apply white vinegar liberally to the area. Allow the vinegar to air dry on the item. Repeat the process until the odor is removed. After the area is dry, sprinkle baking soda liberally and allow to sit for several hours. After the allotted time, vacuum the baking soda up. The baking soda will help remove any lingering odors.

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