

# The Effects of Breathing Cat Urine

By Amanda Denman

## Instructions

- **Step 1:**



- Many cat owners have first-hand experience with the pungent odors associated with cat urine. Because of the foul, irritating scent of cat urine, some believe that it is harmful to the health. Understanding the effects of inhaling or breathing cat urine begins with knowing what causes the discomfort and odor.

## Normal Cat Urine

- **Step 1:**

Normal cat urine is comprised of a number of substances, primarily water. Healthy cat urine contains approximately 0.05 percent ammonia, 0.18 percent sulphate, 0.12 percent phosphate, 0.6 percent chloride, 0.1 percent sodium, 0.1 percent creatinine, 0.003 percent uric acid, 2 percent urea and 95 percent water.

## Urine Odors

- **Step 1:**

The odors associated with cat urine stem from the presence of ammonia. There is such a small quantity of ammonia in healthy urine that it usually has a weak scent. However, concentrated urine, or litter boxes with several urine spots, can have stronger odors. Additionally, bacterial or urinary tract infections in a feline can cause higher concentrations of ammonia and subsequently stronger smells of ammonia. If a cat has exceptionally strong-smelling urine, seek veterinarian care to ensure there are no health problems.

## Ammonia as an Irritant

- **Step 1:**

Ammonia is gas that can be inhaled. Poisoning can occur if enough ammonia is breathed in--but cat urine in normal quantities and concentrations is not strong enough to cause a serious health hazard. If inhaled, ammonia can cause coughing, chest pain or tightness, wheezing, or difficulty breathing. It can also cause irritation in the mucus membranes of the nose, eyes, mouth, and airway. It may cause swelling or a burning sensation and can sometimes cause fever or unrest. Seek medical attention if you come into contact with concentrated amounts of cat urine and experience any of these effects.

## Cat Urine and Pregnancy

- **Step 1:**

Some think that cat urine must be avoided by pregnant women. Although prolonged exposure to ammonia is not recommended during pregnancy, there is no specific medical need to avoid cat urine. However, there is a risk of contracting toxoplasmosis from feline fecal matter. This is a parasitic disease that can affect the fetus and cause abnormalities or spontaneous abortion. Most people who live with cats have been exposed to this parasite. Outside of pregnancy, symptoms of toxoplasmosis are similar to a mild case of the flu and include aches and swollen glands. A blood test can be conducted to determine if the parasite is present in the bloodstream.

Source <http://www.dailypuppy.com/articles/the-effects-of-breathing-cat-urine/c494d4fa-aaf7-3215-761c-b3e86a2e2c65>