



Dog House Soiling

We love our dogs, but not when they use our house as a bathroom. There can be many reasons for your dog's behavior. Figure out the reason and you have a much greater chance of correcting the problem.



Medical Problems

The **first thing** to do is have your dog examined by your veterinarian. Infections, kidney problems, bladder stones, diabetes, cognitive dysfunction, and incontinence are all possible causes. Your veterinarian will want to run some blood and urine tests and possibly x-ray. If there is a medical problem, treatment will often take care of the house soiling issue.

Housetraining

One question to ask yourself is whether your dog was completely housetrained in the first place. Some dogs will use the outdoors but still have accidents in the house. These dogs go outside often enough to avoid most problems.

However, the dog hasn't completely figured out that he is NOT supposed to go inside the house as well. He has accidents when he has to wait longer than usual or you are busy. He just finds a convenient out-of-the-way spot inside.

He may hide it from you because he knows you will get mad when you find a mess inside. However, he has not figured out that the reason is that HE is the one who left the mess.

The solution to this problem is to start from scratch and housetrain your dog just as you would a puppy. Patience, consistency and a sharp eye are necessary to train your dog to potty outdoors.

Marking Behavior

Some dogs will mark their territory by urinating on things. Several things can trigger marking:

- Intact dogs are more likely to mark their territories. Unspayed females will often do it when they come into heat. Neutering and spaying is the first step to take and may be all you need to do.
- Dogs or other animals outside can sometimes trigger the urge to mark.

Try to block your dog's view of other animals or find ways to keep them out of your yard.



- A new pet or new person in the house may be the issue. It could also occur when guests visit or when your dog visits someone else. Introduce new pets to each other rather than just putting them together.

When new people are moving into the house, have them provide treats and play time. When guests visit, keep their belongings out of reach of the dog. Keep your dog close to you if visiting others.

- Sometimes the underlying problem for these dogs is anxiety. Try a pheromone, Adaptil®, to reduce anxiety or discuss medication with your veterinarian.

Submissive and Excitement Urination

Both of these are common in puppies, and, fortunately, most will outgrow the problem.



Submissive urination occurs because the puppy is insecure and shy. He will urinate when someone comes near him, talks to him, if he's startled, or when he's acting submissive.

These pups will crouch down, roll over, flatten their ears, and show you their belly. Often they may be dribbling as they do this.

Excitement urination, however, occurs when the puppy is so excited about seeing you that he can't control himself. He can also do it if he becomes overly excited while playing. These puppies are usually jumping up, barking or whining and may be "out of control".

These puppies need to learn self-confidence and control.

- The most important thing is **Do Not yell at or punish the puppy** for urinating, even if he does it in front of you. He cannot control it. Yelling only makes him more nervous and anxious.
- Don't pet him or use soothing tones when speaking to him. This could give him the message that you want him to urinate.
- Keep greetings low-key: No baby talk, hugging or loud voices. Don't look directly at your pup. Ignore him and don't talk to him if he's overly excited. Wait for him to calm down.
- Train your puppy to help build up his confidence and have him sit for a greeting.
- Avoid dominating positions with your pup. These include bending over him, petting him on top of the head and direct eye contact. This is especially important for the submissive puppy.

Other Reasons

Separation anxiety occurs in dogs that are anxious only when their owners are gone. They may urinate or pass stool in the house among other symptoms. In severe cases, the dogs can be very destructive as well. Read our article, *Separation Anxiety*, to understand that condition.

Some dogs, especially smaller ones or ones with thin coats, don't like cold or rainy weather and prefer to use the house as a potty. Sometimes they only pass stool in the house since that takes longer than urination.



If this is the problem, moving to the desert is a great solution! If that's not feasible, some dogs will tolerate clothing to protect them from the weather.

You can also build an overhang over part of the yard. Some people will decide to train their dog to use an indoor litter pan (made for dogs) or pee pads instead of going outside. This solution often works for people in apartments that don't have easy access to the outdoors.

General Tips

Clean all soiled areas with an enzymatic odor neutralizer made for this purpose. Do this prior to steam cleaning or using any other cleaning products.

If your dog urinates in a specific area, keep the area off limits. Establish a routine for your dog and teach him basic obedience. Crate your dog when you are not home or cannot supervise him.

Consult an animal behavior specialist if the situation does not improve or if you can't figure out why your dog is doing it.