

“Pearls”
of
Veterinary Medicine



Trusted By
The Profession
Since 1981

AT A GLANCE

AAHA Management of Allergic Skin Diseases in Dogs Guidelines.....	2
Getting Crap Out of a Cat.....	4
Harmony among cats – is it possible?.....	1
Importance of Monitoring Vital Signs (TPR).....	1
Options for Control of Pruritis.....	4

BEHAVIOR

Harmony among cats – is it possible?

The kitten socialization period is 2-7 weeks. Kittens start playing about 3 weeks of age and by 8 weeks old, play is **almost exclusively between pairs**. Thus, it is easier to introduce **2 kittens to a household with older cats** since the kittens will play together and leave the older cats alone.

When introducing a new cat, it is best to separate the new cat from others so they are able to see, hear and smell each other but not interact physically. To separate cats outdoors, consider the [Purr...rect fence](#) or a catio. **Forced interactions should be avoided**. To facilitate scent familiarity, **rotate bedding and transfer scents** by rubbing a washcloth on the cats' perioral areas and then on household objects.

Aggression among cats can take various forms: redirected, status-related, play and fear.

Redirected aggression occurs when a cat, unable to confront an external threat, directs its aggression toward a household cat. To minimize visual cues of an outside animal, close blinds/curtains or apply an opaque window film. To deter outside animals, try a [ScareCrow](#). The author also recommended trying [CatStop](#) which has been discontinued, but I found a [similar product](#) on Amazon.

Status-related aggression occurs in established relationships that have been disrupted by a triggering event such as the illness of one cat, a fight that is a result of redirected aggression or the addition of a new cat in the household.

Play aggression is escalation of play. Separate play-aggressive cats unless under supervision and intervene

when play escalates by shaking a bag of treats. **Do not yell** since that escalates the tension.

For all forms of aggression, **use classical conditioning to promote positive interactions** and to desensitize the cats to each other by **offering favorite treats, playing with and grooming when in each other's presence**. A treat the author finds very appealing to cats is [Kitty Kaviar](#) (bonita fish). **Cats are observational learners** so if they see other cats getting along, they may do so also. **Don't bell the aggressor** as it sets up a negative association.

Pheromones include **Feliway Classic** (feline facial pheromone) which calms the cat in unknown or stressful environments; **Feliway MultiCat** (maternal pheromone) which promotes harmony among cats; and **Feliway Optimum** which is a feline pheromone **complex** that “provides an enhanced message of social confidence and safety in the cat's environment.”

If medication is deemed necessary, in general, **treat the victim cat** to increase its confidence using **bupirone 2.5-7.5 mg/cat q12-24h**. For bully cats that are intent on attacking the victim cat, prescribe **fluoxetine 0.5-1 mg/kg/d (2.5-5 mg/cat/day)** or **clomipramine 0.5 mg/kg/day**.

After starting a behavioral medication, it's important to observe at **least three months** of consistently normal behavior before considering tapering off the drug. If anxiety or fear symptoms reappear during this period, adjust the dosage back up and postpone the weaning process.

Terry Curtis, DVM, MS, DACVB, VMX 2024, Cap Rep 42(6):1

CRITICAL CARE

Importance of Monitoring Vital Signs (TPR)

TEMPERATURE

It is crucial to educate the entire team on the importance and rationale behind monitoring vital signs, particularly temperature, pulse, and respiration (TPR). **Studies have shown that aural or axillary and rectal temperatures**

