

Dear Dr. Wise: We just got a new kitten and now our adult cat is having accidents on a rug, what do we do?

An important first step when a cat is urinating outside the litter box is to rule out an infection or medical problem by taking it to your veterinarian. Inappropriate urination, or urinating outside the litter box, can also be a behavioral manifestation of anxiety in your adult cat due to the introduction of a new kitten. Below is a step-by-step outline to start over and help ensure a smooth re-introduction of your new kitten.

- Initially, keep the cats separated.
- Place the new kitten in a room with food/water/litter box/etc. behind a closed door.
- Allow the two cats to interact by smelling under the door and interacting through the closed door.
- Make sure to alternate which cat is in the room and which is allowed to roam free around the house.
- Use a small towel to rub your kitten, then rub your adult cat with the same towel, then move back to the kitten, then back to the adult cat, etc. This will allow you to mix the odors of the cats and getting them used to each other's scent.
- Under direct supervision, place one cat in a carrier while feeding them their favorite food and place the other cat's favorite food in a dish in the same room.
- Over the following days move the food dish closer and closer to the carrier. Make sure to alternate which cat is in the carrier each day.

A Feliway spray or dispenser can be used in the room before bringing the cats into the room in order to decrease their anxiety and stress. As the cats become more and more comfortable with each other you can allow them to interact outside the carrier under your supervision. It is important that you make the interaction pleasurable for both the cats by playing with both of them, petting them, or giving them treats. If you are still unsuccessful in introducing your new kitten to the adult cat after following these suggestions, contact your veterinarian for a consultation with a behaviorist.