

What's with that bad urine smell all of a sudden?

With SoCal's propensity for 'June gloom,' it is common to notice a bad urine smell in your home and on furnishings all of a sudden. It can be frustrating because your dog usually gets out more during this time of the year. But urine is one of the toughest odors to remove. Even when you think it's finally gone, the urine smell can come back again.

You clean the spot, assuming the problem is solved. But then - days, weeks or months later - the disgusting urine smell mysteriously returns ... and this time, it's even stronger than before! Urine odors resurface for two reasons: there is a component to urine that cleaning can't remove. No matter what you do, these deposits don't go away and at certain times, "something" in your home reactivates these deposits, and the urine smell comes back.

That "something" is humidity and quite common with the SoCal 'June gloom'. Humidity increases the sensitivity of odor sensors. So the more humid your house is, the stronger the odors become. Indoor humidity levels also increase during the summer. Every day activities like cooking, showering and drying clothes also cause humidity. And when indoor humidity levels rise, they reactivate the latent urine deposits and the urine odor returns.

Urine is made up of three different parts. Many cleaning products remove the first component - the sticky liquid content. Some can even remove the second component - the stain-causing pigmentation. But nothing removes the third component - the uric acid crystals or "urine salts" that cause odor. It may seem like the urine is gone because the stain and odor disappear, but the urine salts are still there and in a dry state, have no odor. But when humidity levels rise, moisture reactivates the uric acid crystals and their bad odor returns.

There are many products sold on the market to combat urine odors, but frankly, many of them simply don't work because they are not designed to eliminate all three components of urine. Once in carpet, it is next to impossible to get all three eliminated, with the exception of calling in a professional carpet cleaner and TELLING them you have urine spots left by a pet (no shame attached to this - accidents occur).

They'll use the appropriate chemicals - that's why they are professionals!



TLC recommends two products - "NoGo" and "Nature's Miracle" - both readily found at local petshops. In addition, scrubbing down items with a 1:3 solution of white vinegar will chemically change the uric acid crystals and allow easier removal (one part white vinegar to three parts water). There are items (and instances) that you have REALLY soak an object for odor removal - to the point a shopvac is required to remove the excess vinegar/water solution after scrubbing is done.



Could it be your dog has a low grade urinary tract infection? Tests commonly performed at veterinary offices can't always catch it - sometimes it requires a culture to be done (and this takes time). Dogs don't normally urinate inside the house where they live, sleep and eat unless their smell is triggered by a previous odor left behind.

Do you clean with any ammonia products? Check the labels. Have any infants in diapers sat on a couch or the carpet? Or anyone with urinary issues? Dogs can trigger on 1:1,000,000 parts - their smell is that acute! Before you reprimand or punish your canine companion, make sure you've eliminated all possible triggers and reactions to smells left by other animals or humans!