



## CAT LITTER – and why “clumping” is really the only effective option

There are two main categories - either clumping or non-clumping. Clumping is where the waste (especially the urine) “clumps” together in lumps, and then can easily be removed.

Popular clumping and non-clumping products include:

### Wood chip (non-clumping)

This is a non-clumping bio-degradable litter. It is good for scooping out solid waste but not especially good for urine – particularly if the cat claws the litter all over the litter tray when it has finished – as this makes it almost impossible to remove contaminated pieces of wood chip from clean wood chip. If the cat does not disrupt the litter too much and there are distinct areas where the litter is contaminated with urine, rather than removing this with a conventional scoop (with slots), it is best to use something without slots, (such as a very small beach spade such as that used by a small child).

### Non-clumping (many of which are clay-based)

These are non-biodegradable litters and are typically made from calcium silicate or clay crystals. They have the same advantage and disadvantage as wood chip (OK for solid waste but extremely poor for urine). The granules are of a gravel-type texture and are supposed to absorb the urine. Unfortunately they **don't**. **Some** of the urine gets absorbed (turning the granules a darker colour) but the remainder of the urine collects in wet pools at the base of the litter tray. Catsan do a version called “Hygiene Litter” comprising white granules, and Tesco and Sainsbury's sell brown coloured versions of this type.

### Premium Ultra-Clumping (clay base)

These are non-biodegradable and usually comprise very fine clay granules which quickly capture moisture in clumps which are easy to remove for a very practical, efficient and easy way to keep the litter tray fresh. Brands include Catsan “Clumping Litter”.

### Standard Clumping (clay base)

These are non-biodegradable and usually comprise a coarser and less refined clay aggregate compared to ultra-clumping litters. They create a degree of clumping, but not to the same efficient extent as ultra-clumping litters. They cost less than (clay-based) ultra-clumping litter.



### Premium Ultra-Clumping (Bio-degradable)

These are the “crème de la crème” of cat litters and are ultra-clumping, bio-degradable (can be flushed down the toilet) or alternately can be composted.

There are two main makes:

“Cats Best Oko Plus” is made from 100% pure organic wood fibres.

“World’s Best Cat Litter” is mad from whole kernel corn.

### Crystal (Silica Gel) Non-Clumping

Supposedly works on the basis of absorbing urine and odours. You are supposed to remove solid waste daily and the crystals absorb the urine (to some degree). However, we personally feel uncomfortable with the principle of having urine “locked-away” for days in the litter tray. We prefer to work on the basis of removing urine completely from the litter tray as often as possible, and this product cannot do that; only a clumping litter can do that effectively.

### Cats are extremely clean and hygienic

Nearly all cats are fastidiously clean, and only like to toilet in clean litter (i.e. not just completely free of solid waste, but also completely free of urine). Non-clumping litters cannot get away from the fact that no matter how much they (supposedly) absorb urine, **THE CAT CAN ALWAYS DETECT THAT URINE IS STILL PRESENT IN THE LITTER.** A significant proportion of cats, once they detect urine in the litter, will not tread in the litter and therefore have no option but to find somewhere else (outside the litter tray) to urinate or defecate. Within a house, that usual means a carpet or other floor area. That is why occasional so-called “accidents” are not really accidents at all, nor are they examples of cats with “dirty” habits. On the contrary, they are examples of cats exercising very high standards of hygiene.

### Summary

As with most products, you get what you pay for. In our opinion, the best products are all premium ultra-clumping litters and we would personally never entertain non-clumping brands. **Do not be put off by the relatively high price** of premium ultra-clumping litters compared to non-clumping litters or standard clumping litters, as you are not comparing “like for like”. Premium ultra-clumping litters are deceptively economic and hence offer great value, since a quantity of ultra-clumping litter lasts far longer than the same quantity of non-clumping litter.



[www.HomeLovingCats.com](http://www.HomeLovingCats.com)

## **Home Loving Cats Cat Litter Awards**

If you value quality, proper hygiene and convenience, Home Loving Cats recommend the following brands:

### **Gold award**

“Cats Best Oko Plus”, is made in Germany from 100% pure organic wood fibres.

Simply brilliant. Our favourite. We use it ourselves.

### **Silver Award**

“World’s Best Cat Litter” is made in the U.S.A. from whole kernel corn.

Excellent, although the corn “smell” may not be to everyone’s liking.

### **Bronze Award**

Catsan “Clumping Litter” is made by Mars Inc from fine clay granules.

Excellent, but perhaps throws up more dust than our Gold and Silver Award winners.