

My Cat Has Bad Breath and Stinky Poop

CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, discusses possible causes for foul-smelling breath and feces.

By Arnold Plotnick, DVM

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Q: My cat, Charlie, a Maine Coon, has really bad breath. Also, his feces smell more than usual. He is just over a year old and is current on all his vaccinations. Can you tell me what might be the problem? Every time he uses the litterbox he almost runs us out of the house! The smell is horrible. Please help me.

A: Halitosis (bad breath) is often a sign of oral or dental disease in cats. Charlie, being just over a year old, is not very likely to have periodontal disease of such a degree that it would cause noticeable bad breath. Still, I've certainly seen cases of severe gingivitis and periodontal disease in young cats, so this should be checked by your veterinarian.

As for Charlie's feces, the foul smell is probably due to his diet. Is he still eating kitten food? Kitten food is high in protein, and high-protein food often causes very stinky feces. (My cat Crispy is on a high-protein food because of her diabetes, and her stool is deadly.) If he's on kitten food, switch to an adult-maintenance food. That should solve the problem. You may need to try a few different brands before you find one that results in less stinky poop.