

## My Cat Likes to Chew Paper and Plastic

**CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers advice for cats who like to chew unusual items.**

*By Jeanne Adlon*

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**Q:** My cat likes to chew and lick things like paper and plastic. Should I be worried?

**A:** This reminds me of a very funny incident during a cat-sitting house call. When one of my regular clients is traveling, she leaves instructions for the care of her cat, Herbie, on the kitchen table, along with my check. When I arrived to start caring for him during one of her trips, I did not see either the instructions or my check on the table. After a quick search, I noticed shredded paper strewn across the kitchen floor. Herbie had obviously knocked them down, chewed them to bits and generally had a field day playing with them. Fortunately, this was not my first visit and I knew how to care for him. From then on, though, everything essential got taped to a kitchen cabinet.

Cats are attracted to all sorts of objects and can make the strangest choices in what they want to chew or lick. One of my cats likes to lick my hair, which I do not encourage because he has enough trouble with hairballs. I have heard of another who likes to lick her owner's beard. Many of these are relatively harmless habits when done in small doses, unless they involve dangerous substances or anything that can be ingested.

I had a client whose cat Zoe became so constipated she had to take her to the vet because the poor kitty could not go to the bathroom. Amazingly enough, an X-ray revealed that Zoe's stomach was filled with rubber bands. Her owner was flabbergasted! It seems Zoe had been eating rubber bands over a period of time and had been unable to pass them. Fortunately, they were removed and all is well; however all office supplies in Zoe's home are now safely tucked away.

There are plenty of cat toys that are perfect for being chewed, licked and fussed over. However, if your kitty is attracted to other things in your home, make sure they are not inappropriate. I knew someone whose cat liked to eat plastic bags, which is a no-no. Another can't leave her socks around because her cat likes to lick and knead them, which is fine for the kitty but leaves her with a drawer of wet socks. As always, use your common sense.