

## **Ketone Testing 101: Tips and Tricks from the FDMB Collective**

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You understand the importance of ketone testing as a regular part of your treatment protocol for your sugarcat (please see Gorb's "Ketone for Beginners" or Kathy's "Hows and Whys of Ketones" for more information on ketones, ketoacidosis, etc.).

So, you've been to the pharmacy and have the keto-stix or keto-diaistix, now how do you go about getting a sample? Here's some proven methods for successful testing.

*NOTE: With ketone testing the timing of the test is very important, after time the strip will change color on its own so its very important to watch the clock closely.*

### **Method #1: Stalking**

**Gorb's routine:** Gorb is pretty "regular" so we know when to follow him into the cat room. We have a setup with lamp, keto-diaistix, watch, and anti-bacterial hand wipes in close proximity to his boxes. We grab 2 keto-diaistix (they expire within 6 months of opening so instead of throwing 1/2 the bottle out each time we double up at test time, also helps us if we're not sure on a reading). We simply hold the stix in the stream of Gorb's urine, watch the clock, and voila - we're all set! 99 times out of 100 we don't need the hand wipes - but sometimes his aim (or my aim) will be off ☺

### **Method #2: The Buddy System**

**From Laura and Murray:** With us, timing is the deal. I test - feed - shoot at 5am and 5pm. At 5am we BOTH go to the bathroom. The litterbox is right there and Murray feels compelled to join me. So, at that time, as he squats, I slide a very small shallow bowl under his butt, and collect what I need. Collecting it that way allows me to test a few minutes later after I have fed him, or to do a recheck if I have any doubts. It is very rare that this schedule is broken.

**Susan and Shadow's** combo stalking/buddy program:

I can't take any credit for this as it was purely accidental, but I inadvertantly "trained" Shadow to pee on demand at certain times of day.

From observation, I found that Shadow has three times of day when she is likely to pee: 6:30 AM (just before breakfast), 6:30 PM (just after dinner), and 9:30 PM. I tend to be in the bathroom near her pee spot at the first and third of those times, putting in or taking out my contact lenses.

Shadow is a very social kitty, and usually follows me everywhere (hence her name!). Since we were "hanging" in the bathroom at some of her preferred pee times, she went on with her business. I was happy to see a sample materializing, and praised and petted her. Before I knew it, she was peeing on command at those times! If I need a sample and she's not producing for some reason, I wait until those times, take her to the appropriate spot, and wait. (Similar to Corinna's method.) It usually works!

Tips to success with this plan:

1. Observe usual pee times.
2. Start waiting near the litterbox with kitty at those times.
3. Praise and maybe give rewards such as food or brushing, when she pees.

Before you know it, kitty may be producing virtually on command!

### **Method #3: The reservoir**

**Rosemary and Morgenstern's** system: We just hold a 3 oz disposable bathroom cup under Morgen. His neuropathy is pretty bad...so he's low to the litter...and the little cup just fits. Since I'm around all day...and he moves slow (or I have to carry him)...I can usually tell when he's heading for the box. If you're not around, I think the aquarium gravel thing is great.

Similar process from **Karen and dB**: I also use a ladle. First thing in the morning, I go and de-clump the litterbox. If I wait a bit, dB usually wanders over to use it while it's clean, and I just lift his tail and put the ladle between his legs. Then I can test out of the ladle and can get a very accurate time countdown. The plastic wrap and leaving a small can in the box did not work for us. Haven't tried the aquarium gravel.

Tips from **Laura and Clark** : Using a dixie cup partially buried in the box or using the lid to a butter dish in the box (remembered from prior threads, original genius unknown).

### **Method #4: Bait and switch (cat litter)**

A detailed explanation from **Karen and Shutterbug**: We use the gravel. I got WHITE gravel, which may not seem important, but it was the only one where I could see the yellow pee without sticking my hands in there and feeling for it! LOL! I had blue cuz it matched the litter box I was using, but it didn't work as well.

Anyway, we got a kitten sized litter box and a 2 pound bag of white aquarium gravel. We washed the gravel first (at somebody's suggestion to get rid of the dust). I put half the bag in the bottom of the litter pan and saved the other half.

Shutterbug prefers her privacy and I had been trying to catch her peeing for a week without success. If I walked into the room she would stop and go take a nap! Don't know how she held it sometimes! Once somebody said that a ketone reading could be gotten whether the pee was brand new or up to 5 hours old (you MUST have fresh pee for the BG stix), it was easy.

She almost always goes between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. while I'm getting ready for work. So in the morning, I pick up her Litter Maid and put down the kitten box. We do pills, have breakfast, mom takes a shower and 90% of the time, when I come back downstairs, there is a nice puddle in the gravel. I dip the stix, time it and switch boxes back. The gravel can be reused, which is a great cost saver.

Take the pee gravel outside and rinse it off with the hose

Dump it out on a big towel to dry on the back porch in the sun

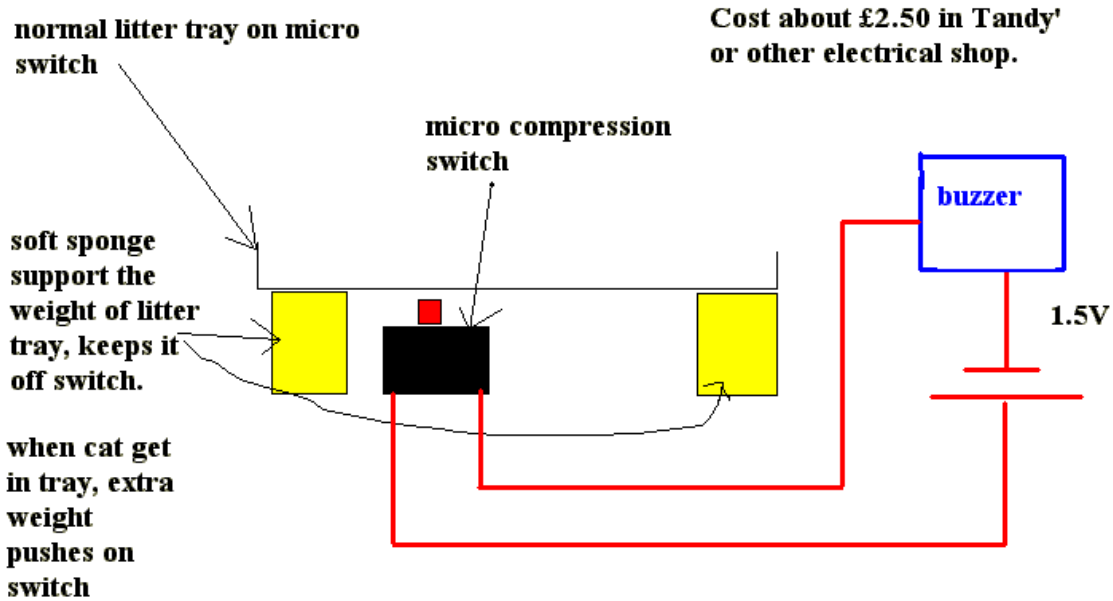
Pick up the dry gravel from the previous day, dump it in the little box, take it in the house

I know some folks dump the gravel in a pillow case, hang in the shower and hose it out there, leaving it to drip dry over the tub. I have 2 batches of gravel going, so one is always dry and ready to go.

Bug doesn't mind the gravel, she still digs and covers, but I just have to tip the box to make a puddle form. Works good for us!

### Method #5: The cat box alarm

This method is not only ingenious but is probably worthy of a Nobel prize in the field of "cat elimination discoveries"! **Sally and Crew** came up with the following (parts are readily available at your local Radio Shack/Tandy or similar store):



### Method #6: The straw technique

Basically this is a "live catch" method but **Michelle's** clever hubby figured out a way to get close to the urine without getting wet ;) Use a plain ol' drinking straw with a slit cut into it to hold the ketodiastix.

Here's a pic!

