



Tiberius 305939: What to Expect

Tiberius is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. He has a sad story, but now he is ready to find that special person to give him the life he deserves.

Tiberius was found as a stray by a Good Samaritan with an injury to his left hind leg. He was brought to Dove Lewis Emergency Animal Hospital where it was determined he had a bullet in his leg. After assessing his condition and making him comfortable, he was transferred to OHS to undergo further medical care. He was found to have a fracture of his left tibia as a result of the bullet wound. His initial behavior at Dove Lewis and OHS presented as frustration and would result in him hissing, swatting and lunging at staff when they attempted to examine him. This behavior resulted in him biting 2 people on the hands over a few weeks when health exams were being performed. After these 2 bites, he was moved to the Behavior Modification Program. The environment in the BMOD program is more conducive to helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, and more one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about Tiberius.

Tiberius was clearly frustrated with his current situation and even though he was on pain meds, we suspect the bites to the hands were a combination of pain and frustration from being in a strange place with people he didn't know. While in BMOD, his frustrated behavior continued, and he would sometimes swat at our legs or hiss at us when we interacted with him. Due to this behavior and our inability to safely handle him for ongoing medical treatment, the decision was made to amputate his left hind leg. His behavior at the time made splinting the fracture and physical therapy difficult for us to attain.

As Tiberius learned to live with only 3 legs, he continued to display frustrated, excitable behavior, and during this time he bit 2 more times, this time on legs, when staff entered his kennel to provide care for him. After the 4th bite, the decision was made to limit the amount of people that were approved to interact with him in the hopes we could provide a more consistent, stable environment and try to find an identifiable trigger for these bites. We began to notice that his body language would change when he knew staff were coming into his kennel to feed him. He would start to vocalize more and pace in his kennel. As we provided him his food, his excitement for it would turn to overstimulation if we weren't giving him the food fast enough. Any time we opened a can of food or treat bag, Tiberius would perk up from whatever he was doing, vocalize and pace with the anticipation of being fed. This anticipation of food would sometimes turn to frustration, and he would swat at us if he thought we weren't giving him the food fast enough. Even if it wasn't feeding time, he would sometimes stand at his bowl expecting us to fill it if we were just hanging out with him. We worked on regulating his emotions by rewarding him with food when he was in a relaxed manner. Over time, with the consistent routine and stable environment he started to understand what to expect from us, and we saw the frustrated behavior he originally displayed start to diminish.

It's hard to say exactly what caused Tiberius to bite 4 different times as each incident appeared to have different triggers. We believe the first two bites were due to pain and frustration from the injury to his leg and the remaining bites were due to frustrated, excitable behavior from adjusting to having 3 legs or when he wanted to be fed. Tiberius continues to become excited or overstimulated at times, sometimes from playing with toys or other cats, and always around feeding time. We understand that in these moments to give him space and allow him time to decompress before engaging with him. We only bring food or treats out to offer him when he is in a relaxed and calm manner.

Tiberius has met several other kitties while in BMOD and does well with them. He enjoys playing and cuddling with them and may enjoy having a feline friend in his new home. He loves all kinds of toys, feather ones, tunnels, and anything he can pounce on. When he is in an exuberant state of play, we understand that he may overstimulate, so we

limit any petting during this time. When a cat is overstimulated, they have a higher probability of biting and we wanted to prevent that from happening. Only when he is in a relaxed and calm state do we offer to pet him, and even then, we stop when his body language tells us he is becoming excited. We are also mindful when giving him food and understand that his excitable behavior can turn into frustration. His new adopters should expect to continue working with him on this. He needs a home with a patient person who is willing to provide him with a calm home, one with a consistent routine and daily interactive play sessions, and someone that is very familiar with feline body language.

Tiberius has tested positive for FIV and will need to be indoors only in his new home. FIV is a virus that progresses very slowly, gradually affecting a cat's immune system over a period of years. This leaves them more susceptible to other infections that healthy cats would be able to fight off. FIV is most commonly spread through bite wounds, and research has shown it is generally not spread through casual, cordial contact between cats. FIV is a disease specific to cats and cannot be spread to humans or dogs. Cohabitation with cats not infected with FIV is generally considered to be okay; while it is possible for the cat to transmit the virus to another cat living in the household, the risk of serious fights between cats with a stable social structure is low.

For more information on FIV, please visit this helpful link: <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-immunodeficiency-virus>

Here's how to help Tiberius during your first month together:

Confine Tiberius to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Tiberius with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure he cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide him with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like his cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket. Once he is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to play with toys, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home.

Enrich his space. Tiberius loves toys, scratching posts, and perches with a window view. Giving him the opportunity to climb, jump, play, scratch and engage in natural cat behavior may help reduce overstimulated behaviors.

Keep a routine. A predictable daily schedule will help Tiberius settle into your home. Give him time to get to know you before introducing him to new people.

Schedule interactive play sessions with him every day. Tiberius needs at least 10 minutes of dedicated play in the morning and again in the evening to alleviate stress and built-up frustration. Try to mimic natural hunting behavior. Choose a fishing-pole toy and make the toy soar around the room like a bird, engaging Tiberius's attention. Or simulate mouse activity by sliding the end of the toy around on the floor in quick, jerky movements. Allow him to pounce and catch the toy and bat it around. Then start again. End your play session by allowing him to capture the toy.

Practice crate training. Leave his carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of his normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so he can go in and out on his own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten him. You can also clicker train him to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Tiberius get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

We're here to help!

We want Tiberius to be successful in his new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Erika at erikas@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Tiberius now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!