

Bringing Your New Cat Home

Caring For the Feline Bundle of Fur You Just Brought Home

To welcome your new cat or kitten to its new home, be kind, patient and willing to spend lots of time with it to help it adjust. The following items are recommended to care for your cat properly:

- Food and water dishes; ceramic or stainless steel are recommended since some cats are allergic to plastic
- A cat carrier (inexpensive plastic carriers are ideal for future transport needs).
- A comb or brush and special cat nail clippers; [check page on not declawing](#).
- A good-sized litter tray, litter scooper and cat litter; some cats will not use hooded trays. Disposable litter is also not recommended especially for kittens since too much clay is ingested when they clean their paws after stepping in the box.
- A scratching post on which a cat can be trained to sharpen its claws (instead of the furniture); The post should be about one yard high vertically and balanced on a broad base so that a cat can fully extend itself and not shake the post or knock it over.
- Cat toys (filled with catnip), plastic or hard rubber balls and feather or string teasers. Remove all strings or loose items cats can swallow. Store teasers in a safe place while you are not playing with your cat so that feathers and string cannot be eaten. Grocery bags, empty boxes and wadded up pieces of paper make good throwaway toys that cats love.

The following are suggestions to cat proof your home and make it safe for your kitten or cat:

- Securely screen all windows. Don't leave a window open without a screen or a cat can jump out. Make sure screens are securely installed so that a cat leaning against it cannot fall out.
- Place items that could be easily swallowed out-of-reach. Pins, needles, string, rubber bands, buttons, tinsel or aluminum foil can be fatal if ingested.
- Close shelves and drawers, dishwashers and doors on washers and dryers into which a cat could crawl and hide.
- Remove dangerous plants that could poison your cat. Some cats like plants and others never eat them! The most common lethal plants are cactus, daffodil, holly, hyacinth, English ivy, parlor ivy, jasmine, lily of the valley, philodendron, poinsettia and dieffenbachia. Safe plants include Swedish ivy, coleus, African violets, spider plants, ferns and palms.

Introducing your Cat to the Household

Take the kitten or cat out of the carrying case as soon as you arrive home. Reduce the commotion in the household and calm young family members. Pick up the cat and place it in its litter box so it can learn where this is located. Also show the cat where its food and water bowls will be.

Frequently a new cat will hide under a bed or sofa when it first arrives in a new home. The cat will come out as soon as it feels secure in the household.

The first night in a new home can be an unsettling experience for a young kitten that has been used to sleeping in a warm cozy box with its mother or siblings. It is

important that you decide on your first day where the pet should sleep - in its own bed or box, next to or on a family member's bed. If the pet is going to sleep on a bed with a family member (as most cats do and many people enjoy) encourage this on the first night. It's important not to change your mind later.

Handle your cat with care and teach your children how to hold a pet. Never lift a cat by its forelegs, paws, tail or scruff of the neck. Lift the cat by placing one arm under the cat's chest. As you lift, place your free arm under its hindquarters so that he or she feels supported.

Remember what makes cats so endearing to most people can also make them frustrating to a new cat owner. While some cats seem aloof and independent others are in-your-face "I want your attention" types. Some cats come into a new environment and take over while others seem afraid of their own shadow. Accept your new cat's personality for what it is. With patience and kindness a wonderful human/animal bond will be formed. If you have a certain personality in mind when adopting a new kitten or cat make sure you ask the adoption volunteer. Since volunteers foster most of the Humane Society animals in homes, their personalities are known. Although we take back animals at any time for any reason, we feel adopting an animal should be a serious family decision and should be entered into for the life of the animal.