

CAT CARE 101

Much like you, your pet needs to be recognized and understood. And, like you, he or she experiences a wide range of physical and emotional feelings, such as affection, stress, pain and contentment.

Companion animals in particular are remarkably similar to us in their ability to form bonds, feel loss, happiness, fear and joy.

We believe that a GOOD HOME recognizes the family pet as a conscious being who perceives and feels (is sentient), and possesses unique characteristics that makes him or her an individual. Pets can be intelligent, funny, sweet, demanding, playful or inquisitive—just like humans!



A GOOD HOME treats a pet with love and respect

Most often it's not too difficult to know what your pet wants or needs, but there will be times when you might not fully understand what is happening with them, so it's very important to be attuned to signals they may give you (vocalizing and/or physical/behavioral changes) and to make time to connect and communicate with them.

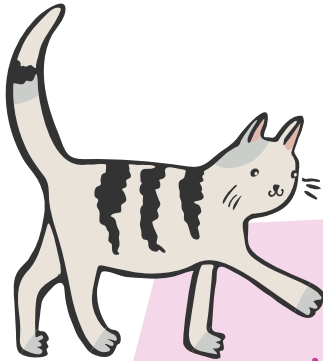
One of your cat's primary needs is that he or she needs you!



Please read through the basic care information on the following pages. It is only intended as a broad overview, but we hope it may offer some new information, address any possible misconceptions or simply reinforce what you already know.

SHOPPING LIST

- Bowls for food and water
- The highest quality wet and/or dry food that is affordable
- Litter box
- Litter
- Scratching post or a surface made specifically for scratching (cardboard scratcher, sisal mat, etc)
- A carrier
- Grooming tools (nail clippers, brush and/or comb)
- Bedding
- Toys and treats



Most cats like to be invited to play.
Catnip and a wand toy make great icebreakers!

PLANNING FOR YOUR NEW PET

What to consider:

- Location of food and water bowls: should not be near the litter box
- Location of the litter box: the ideal location is easily accessible but offers some privacy
- Type of litter box: open vs one with a hood or lid
- Size of litter box: choose one that is sized appropriately for the cat. Additionally, it is a good idea, at least initially, to use the same type of box that the cat is already accustomed to. Top entry litter boxes or litter boxes with a door often require training and can always be transitioned to at a later time
- Type of litter: sand, paper, pellets
- Where your pet will sleep
- Climbing/perching options
- Toys and playtime
- Location of the scratching post



Think about where your cat will eat,
sleep and use the litter box



COST OF CARE FOR ONE CAT

Daily average cost: \$2 for good quality food and litter

Weekly average cost: \$14 to upwards of \$20, if toys and treats are included

Monthly average cost: \$60 to upwards of \$80, if toys and treats are included

Annual minimum cost: \$730 to over \$1000, if toys, treats and a basic vet visit are included

Veterinary Care

A basic examination at a private veterinarian can average \$50-\$100, depending on the office and its location. In order to understand your cat's health, blood work, fecal tests and other tests may be recommended that can range from \$40-\$200 per test.

Veterinary care is important and necessary



Emergency Care

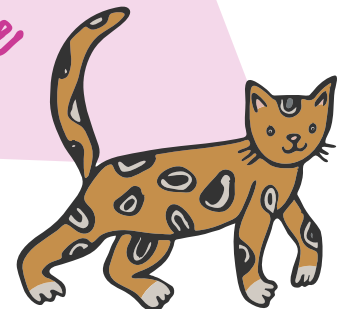
Your pet may require emergency care in the course of his or her lifetime. While infrequent, some reasons for a visit to the ER include having an accident, ingesting a poisonous substance/foreign object or treatment for an undetected illness that becomes acute.

The cost of these visits varies widely depending on the illness, recommended treatment and your location. A basic emergency visit can cost \$100-\$300. An ultrasound can range in cost from \$300-\$600. X-rays range from \$75 to \$150 or more. In depth, emergency blood work can cost from \$300-\$600.

FOOD AND WATER

- Cats must have access to fresh drinking water at all times
- Cats are “obligate carnivores” which means they **MUST** consume meat in order to survive. Cats can not subsist on an exclusively vegetarian or vegan diet
- Cats need to eat a diet that is specific to their species. They should not be fed human food.
- Cats naturally prefer smaller, more frequent meals, so ideally they would be fed at least twice a day, approximately 12 hours apart
- Food, wet or dry, should be of the highest quality that is affordable
- Food and water bowls should be washed daily
- Bowls should be sized appropriately for kitty to eat and drink from comfortably
- Avoid plastic dishes as these are not easily sanitized and can cause chin irritation or acne. Stainless steel is best

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LITTER BOX

The litter box should be large enough for your cat to fit inside comfortably. The recommended size is one and half times the length of the cat. Your cat should be able to turn around comfortably inside the litter box. A hood or lid should not touch the cat's back.

Make sure that the litter box is large enough for your cat to be able to turn around comfortably inside of it!



Ideally the litter box will be located in an easily accessible area that offers some privacy—a place where the cat will feel safe when using it but be able to make an easy “escape” if a loud noise or unexpected activity should occur.

Scoop as necessary to keep the box free of waste. At a minimum the box should be cleaned once daily, more often if the household has additional cats. This will reduce odors as well as significantly reduce the possibility of the cat eliminating outside the box.

VETERINARY CARE

Like you, pets can become ill and, like you, they can suffer from many of the same ailments that you do, such as cold viruses, bacterial infections requiring antibiotic treatment, thyroid disease, tooth decay, diabetes, cancer and, as they age, arthritis and even senility. They can have accidents that may require a bandage, surgery and/or stitches.

It is important to have a go-to veterinarian who is acquainted with your pet's health and can help you manage any issues should they arise



A visit to your veterinarian will include an exam and, often, especially for ailing or older cats, blood work, to check basic values. Sometimes a fecal analysis will be recommended.

Core vaccinations

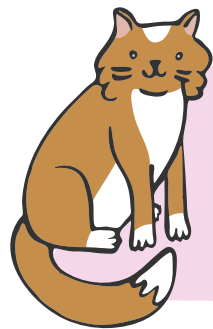
- The FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis Calicivirus and Panleukopenia) vaccination can be administered as young as 6 weeks. At least one booster is strongly recommended in order to fully develop a kitten's immune system. Additional boosters can be given every 3-4 weeks, until 16 weeks
- Rabies vaccinations should be administered at 4 months of age. A booster should be given within one year and every one to three years, depending on the type of vaccine used

GROOMING

Most cats love to be brushed or combed! Some may not, of course, or find it overly stimulating, so in those instances look for the grooming approach that kitty likes best. Consider a soft or slicker style brush, a comb or grooming “mitt”.

Some cats’ coats are prone to developing a thick undercoat or mats which can be very uncomfortable and even painful. In this instance, brush regularly with a tool made specifically for this type of coat, which will maintain a healthy coat and a happy disposition!

Cats do an excellent job of bathing themselves and rarely need to be bathed in water. In lieu of a bath, your cat’s coat can be freshened with a lightly moistened paper towel or commercial pet wipe.



For most cats, a bath should be a last resort

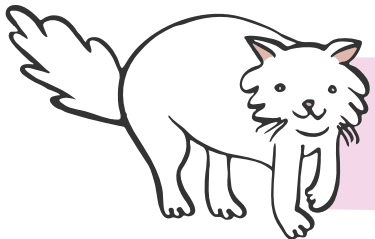
FLEAS

Fleas are a common problem that can be a source of discomfort and sometimes very serious irritation to your cat. They can cause intestinal Tapeworms and, for more sensitive cats, dermatitis (itchy skin, hot spots, thinning fur). In some instances, cats can even be allergic to fleas.

It is possible to manage fleas effectively. If you suspect fleas are in your household, be sure to clean pet bedding frequently (vacuum, wash and dry) and treat cats regularly with a topical flea medication such as Frontline or Revolution (available through your veterinarian). However, in cases where your cat is particularly sensitive you may want to treat topically and also “bomb” the entire household in order to get rid of the infestation.

Ways to combat fleas:

- Monthly topical drops, such as Revolution or Frontline, that are applied between the shoulder blades
- Capstar is an over-the-counter pill that kills all fleas within 15 minutes of ingestion and lasts for 24 hours. This is useful if the cat is experiencing obvious discomfort due to flea infestation
- A flea comb or flea collar
- A bath is a last resort for most cats, but recommended for cats or kittens suffering from a serious infestation of fleas. Dawn dishwashing liquid will kill fleas and remove flea dirt



Fleas can cause your pet a lot of discomfort!

DENTAL CARE: THE EIGHT WEEK PLAN—PART 1

Eight weeks is the minimum, not the maximum!

Supplies:

- Veterinary toothpaste in a flavor your cat likes. **Human toothpaste is not safe for cats**
- A soft, fingertip brush or veterinary toothbrush. A toothbrush is best for removing plaque, but if your cat will only tolerate a fingertip toothbrush, that's okay!



Follow a toothbrushing session with a favorite treat! Aim to brush your cat's teeth at least every 3 days. Daily is best!

DENTAL CARE: THE EIGHT WEEK PLAN—PART 2

Remember to RELAX and TAKE IT SLOW!



STEP 1

Weeks 1-2: Once a day, put a small amount of toothpaste for pets on your finger (or on your cat's food bowl) and let him or her lick it off. This will get your cat used to the taste. If your cat doesn't like toothpaste, you can substitute tuna, all-meat baby food or cat food gravy. But toothpaste is best!

STEP 2

Weeks 2-4: Once a day, slip your finger, covered with toothpaste (or a substitute), between your cat's upper lip and upper teeth. Briefly rub the outer surface of the teeth. Afterward, offer praise by gently stroking your cat's whiskers. This mimics the way a mother cat grooms her kittens and will help your cat associate tooth brushing with something pleasurable.

STEP 3

Weeks 4-6: Once a day, put a small amount of toothpaste (or a substitute) on a toothbrush and allow your cat to lick it off. This will acquaint your cat with the sight and feel of the toothbrush.

STEP 4

Weeks 6-8: Once a day, slip the toothbrush between your cat's upper lip and teeth and gently rub where the teeth meet the gums. Focus on the canines (fangs) and teeth that are further back in the mouth. Don't try to brush the inner surface (tongue side) of the teeth. Aim to brush 5-10 seconds on each side. As your cat becomes accustomed to this routine, brush the lower teeth as well.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS

The following chemicals, medications and drugs must be contained safely away from pets:

- Any and all medication intended for human consumption
- Any and all recreational drugs such as marijuana
- Common household cleaning solutions such as bleach, ammonia and hydrogen peroxide
- Common household chemicals and solvents such as antifreeze, turpentine and rubbing alcohol

Essential oils should NEVER be applied directly to your cat's coat as some are poisonous and can be injected while grooming



Additionally...

- The smoke from incense or cigarettes can create serious respiratory problems (asthma, pneumonia, etc) for your pets
- Essential oil diffusers should not be placed in the same room where pets spend most of their time as some oils are poisonous to them, can settle on their fur and be injected while grooming
- Your pet may find the aroma produced by essential oils, incense or smudging unpleasant, so make sure they have a place to go where the smell is not overpowering

COMMON HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS CONTINUED

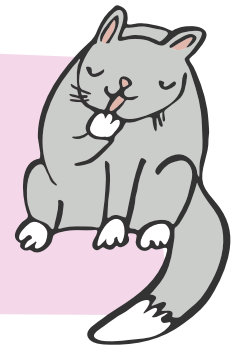
Human food that is poisonous to cats

- Alcohol
- Avocados
- Chives
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Garlic
- Grapes
- Macadamia nuts
- Onions and onion powder
- Raisins
- Salt
- Tea leaves
- Yeast dough
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener)

Common household plants that are poisonous to cats

- Amaryllis: vomiting and diarrhea
- Azalea: lack of coordination, trembling, collapse
- Cactus: punctures skin, infection
- Caladium: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, shaking head, difficulty breathing
- Creeping Charlie: vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, cramps
- Easter Lily: can cause kidney failure
- Dieffenbachia: affects the central nervous system
- Ivy: vomiting, diarrhea, excitable behavior
- Mistletoe berries: vomiting, diarrhea, blistering in the mouth, difficulty breathing
- Philodendron: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, shaking head, difficulty breathing
- Poinsettia: see Mistletoe

Food that is safe for human consumption is
NOT necessarily safe for cat consumption!



INDOOR VERSUS OUTDOOR

In some instances it is appropriate for a cat to remain outdoors, such as in the case of working or feral cats. However, allowing a house cat to free roam invites many dangers. Your house cat could encounter a territorial feral (untamed) cat who may initiate a fight in which your pet could become injured. FIV and FELV viruses are communicated via bite wounds and subject your cat long term health issues. If your house cat is not accustomed to being outdoors, he or she runs the risk of becoming stuck or trapped in an unfamiliar place. Friendly or particularly attractive cats run the risk of being taken.

Please keep house cats where
they belong: **INDOORS!**



Window safety and “high rise syndrome”

Cats are notoriously curious and can easily escape from an open window, so it is very important that windows are equipped with screens and **IMPERATIVE** that window screens on upper stories are intact and secure.

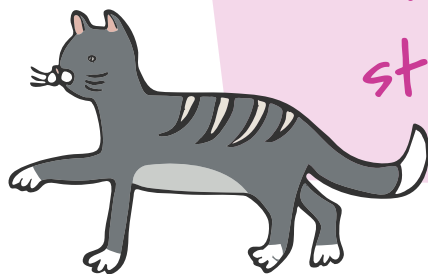
The problem of cats falling from windows is so common that there is a term for it: high rise syndrome. Accidents and death from falls are **EASILY PREVENTED** by securing windows with screens!

DECLAWING

Declawing is not a “permanent nail trim”. It is major surgery that amputates or cuts through the last bone of a cat’s claw or, in some cases, severs the tendons so that the cat can no longer use its claws.

More is known now about declawing, such as that it can cause permanent nerve damage and pain or simply cause frustration to the extent that it creates behavioral issues for the cat as it is their natural tendency to stretch and sharpen their nails.

Unless it is performed for medical reasons, declawing is considered inhumane to the extent that some states have proposed anti-declawing legislation and in most European countries it is deemed inhumane. We agree and fully expect that our adopters will find other means to address scratching behavior, such as regular nail trims, providing scratching posts, gentle training around which surfaces are acceptable to scratch, pheromone (Feliway) therapy, vinyl nail caps or other humane deterrents, such as double-sided tape applied to furniture.



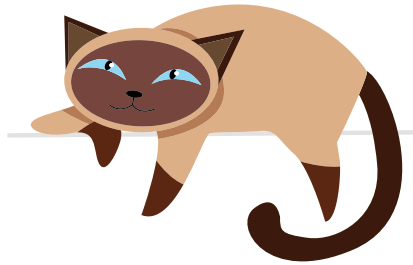
It is instinctive for a cat to stretch and sharpen their nails



CAT BODY LANGUAGE



FRIENDLY



RELAXED



TRUSTING



ANXIOUS



ATTENTIVE



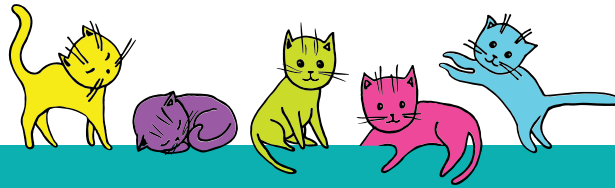
IRRITATED



WORRIED



TERRIFIED



Thank you for reading
CAT CARE 101

