



INTRODUCING YOUR CAT TO ITS NEW HOME

By selecting a cat as your pet, you have chosen an extremely clean pet with legendary skills for hunting – and one that usually needs little housetraining because its mother usually has already taught it to use the litter box. **All these advantages come in one furry package that requires little care but provides excellent companionship. Cats, however, demand that their love and loyalty be earned.**

Cats must have regular meals, clean litter, grooming, and attention in the form of play. A cat will be quite content to live its entire life indoors provided that its owner offers companionship.

Male or female, kittens and cats are affectionate, intelligent, and playful. However, unless you plan to breed your cat, **neutering is recommended** to keep males from spraying, and females from producing unwanted litters. Neutering and spaying should be performed at 5-8 months of age.

Needed supplies for a new cat include a proper health record with dates of vaccinations and dewormings, high quality food, bowl for water and food, a litter pan with litter and scoop, Cat shampoo, grooming tools, a pet carrier, and of course, toys.

Prepare your home for the new cat before letting it loose. Be sure all doors and windows are closed to prevent escape. Place the cat's bed (crate) in a secluded area and the litter box in another secluded area. Take the cat out and let it explore the room where it is to stay. Kittens and cats will explore endlessly until it feels totally comfortable in the surroundings.

When the cat becomes comfortable, its tail will go straight up. Once it feels comfortable, it will start to groom itself.

Show the cat the litter box, and place the cat in it several times. It's rare for a cat to reject the box. If this does happen, the litter box should be moved to another more secluded area. If the problem continues, it may be necessary to place several boxes around the home. The cat will find one that suits its need for privacy within 24 hours. Remember, cats are **extremely** clean pets.

It is surprisingly easy for cats and even dogs to adapt to each other – **if they are gradually and gently introduced.**

Unlike most pets, cats remain true to their "meat-eater" heritage, and have special food requirements.

Cats cannot process vitamins directly from vegetables, so a cat must eat the meat of animals that can convert vegetable vitamins to a digestible form. That's why, in the wild, a cat must eat ALL of its prey's carcass to derive essential proteins, minerals, and vitamins. **Taurine**, for example, is an amino acid that is vital to eyesight. Non-meat eaters can make taurine in their body, but cats cannot. Therefore, they **must** eat foods that contain taurine.

Commercial diets for cats must be balanced and nutritional, specialized, and concentrated in small portions. Therefore feline foods are slightly more expensive than dog foods. Wet or dry food for a cat should contain 30-40% protein.

Water is extremely important to the cat. Insufficient fluid intake can cause the urine to become too concentrated leading to urinary stone problems. It is interesting to note that cats do **not** have a “thirst” reflex. This makes it easy for the cat **not** to drink sufficient water each day. They do not sense the need to drink since they are not thirsty. Grown cats should drink a cup of water daily. Feeding canned food will help add the much needed water in your cats daily intake. Changing the water at least 1-2 times a day or using some commercial soft water will also help ensure your cats water intake is sufficient.

If the cat does not eat well within the first 36 hours in the new home, it may be that it misses familiar surroundings. It may be necessary to force feed the cat to stimulate appetite. We also recommend feeding some **strong smelling canned foods** during the early growing months.

The major appetite stimulant for the cat is SMELL!! Since dry foods do not have as strong a smell as canned foods, some cats are more reluctant to eat dry food.

Make diet changes slowly. Any abrupt change can cause digestive upsets resulting in vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Allow the cat plenty of REST TIME. Cats sleep about 22 hours each day. Adequate rest is necessary for optimum growth and development. Shaking when sleeping is “mother nature’s way” of exercising the muscles.

Guard against the cat swallowing foreign objects. Quite often, we must perform surgery to remove foreign objects from the stomach and intestinal tract. These objects include dental floss, string, fishing line, marbles, needles, or just about any other small object you can think of. Covered trash cans, especially in the kitchen and bathrooms are highly recommended.

By reducing stress and allowing the cat to feel comfortable on its own terms, you will enjoy many years of affection, love, and loyal companionship.

