



What every new cat owner needs to know

Tips for new cat owners

Congrats on the newest addition to your family! The simple tips in this guide can help you establish good habits from the start to keep your cat happy and healthy for years to come.

Cat-proof your home

Look high, low and behind furniture for anything your cat can get to. Keep a particular eye out for dangling strings or cords, which are irresistible to cats but can pose strangulation or even electrocution hazards. Remove any flower arrangements that include lilies. Lilies are very toxic and sicken or kill thousands of cats annually.

ID your cat

If your cat gets lost, proper identification can help ensure a quick reunion.

Collar and identification tags

Your cat should always wear a breakaway collar, even while inside. Make sure ID tags are clean, legible and up to date with your best contact numbers.

Microchip

Without external IDs, many pets wind up in shelters. Microchip your cat and be sure to register the chip with the manufacturer. Don't forget to update your contact info each time it changes.

Introducing new pets to your pack

Bringing home a new cat can cause stress and unwanted behavior from your other animals.

Scent introductions

Before any face-to-face intros, allow pets to grow comfortable with each other's scent. Let them sniff each other through a closed door, then through a baby gate. Also, allow the newbie and the resident pet to wander freely, one at a time, through a room where the other has already been.

Play referee

Always supervise pets until you know how they'll get along.

Cat refuge

Establish "safe havens" for cats by creating high perches out of dogs' reach or by using a baby gate to keep dogs out of the room. Also, consider crating your dog while your cat explores.

Food faux-paws

Cats are carnivores and need a meat-based diet for survival. Never feed your cat a vegan or vegetarian diet, and avoid feeding table scraps and bones. Consult your veterinarian on the best diet for your cat.

The skinny on chubby pets

Pet obesity is a real threat to your cat's health. Just a few extra pounds can lead to obesity-related problems such as arthritis, urinary tract problems and diabetes. Your veterinarian can help determine the safest and most effective diet and exercise program for your cat.

Training and socialization

Yes, it's possible to train a cat. In fact, it's quite important. Proper training and socialization helps establish a stronger bond so you can enjoy a happier, more rewarding relationship.

Handle with care

Cats like to be petted gently and on their own terms. Watch for rapid tail movements—this is a sign that your cat has had enough.

Coaching tools

If you need to discipline your cat, do it only when you catch her in the act, and use only humane techniques such as shaking a noisemaker or spritzing a water bottle.

Scratch spot

Provide at least one sturdy scratching post for your cat. Make it more appealing by lacing it with catnip and rewarding her with treats when she uses it.

Safe toys

Give toys designed to engage your cat with noise, scent or quick movements. Prevent dangerous internal injuries by making sure there are no strings that can be accidentally ingested.



Litter box basics

Urinary tract issues are some of the most common reasons cats visit the veterinarian. These problems can be serious and expensive to treat.

Urinating outside of the box is also one of the top reasons cats wind up at the shelter. Cats don't like messy litter boxes! Cleaning the litter box daily can help prevent this issue and alert you to any potential urinary problems.

The scoop on litter

Most cats prefer clumping, unscented litter. If it's fragrant to you, it'll probably overwhelm your cat's keen sense of smell. Be sure to scoop daily or more, depending on the number of cats.

Box count

Provide at least one litter box per cat, plus one extra. So if you have two cats, get three litter boxes. Place them in quiet areas that provide privacy yet ensure easy access.

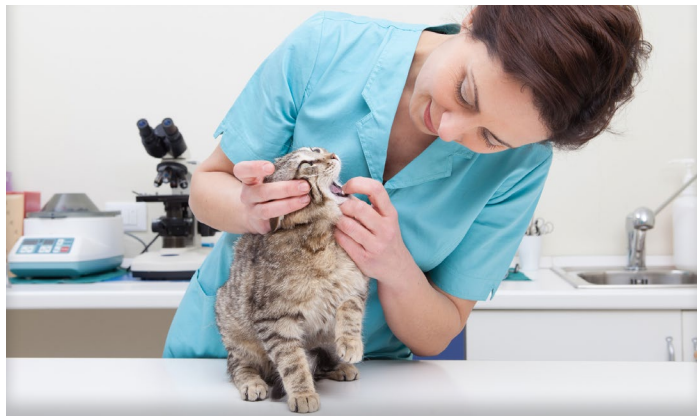


Veterinary care 101

Providing regular veterinary care from the start is the best way to ensure a lifetime of good health.

Healthy start

Take new cats for a complete veterinary checkup and necessary vaccinations. Kittens are susceptible to everything from common respiratory infections to feline distemper.



Separate to protect

Until they receive a clean bill of health from the veterinarian, new cats should be kept away from other pets.

Spay or neuter

This simple surgical procedure has many benefits, including a reduced risk of certain cancers, better overall health and improved temperament.

An ounce of prevention . . .

Regular vet visits help your veterinarian identify potential problems before they become serious. When detected early, diseases can be simpler and less expensive to treat.

Be prepared

- ✓ Program your phone with numbers for:
 - Your veterinarian
 - 24-hr emergency veterinarian
 - Pet Poison Helpline (855-289-0358)
- ✓ Save a note in your phone with your pet's weight and current medications
- ✓ Sign up for Nationwide pet insurance coverage

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