



HUMANE SOCIETY FOR BOONE COUNTY



PO BOX 708

877-473-6722 Lebanon IN 46052 hsforbc@gmail.com

FELINE ADOPTION

I. The First 24 Hours

- Isolate the cat in a small "cat proof" room free of poisonous plants, items that can easily be ingested and electrical cords. Toilet seat should also always be kept down.
- Room should have litter box, food and water, and a comfortable bed.
- WHY? It gives cats a safe, manageable place to take in the sights, smells, and sounds of their new home. Remember that they have been accustomed to living in a very small space and having too much space can be very overwhelming. Confinement gives kittens an opportunity to practice good litterbox habits until they are ready to learn the whole map of the house. It also keeps the new cat away from other cats or animals until they are ready to start introductions.

II. ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

- Kittens: after they are well adjusted in their small "home base" room, can begin short supervised forays into the rest of the home. Each trip should end back at "home base". Never carry a kitten to a different part of the house and leave them alone—they will not make it back to the litterbox if they have not had a chance to map out that part of the house.
- Cats: will let you know when they are ready to explore the rest of the house by showing the three P's: pooping, playing, and purring. However, this can be deceiving, as cats will try hard to escape from a new home and may casually stroll about the house looking for a way out. They may appear to be relaxed but are not truly comfortable and may in fact become more anxious as they explore the house.
- It is important to go at the pace of your cat: each cat will have a different adjustment period.
- Phases of Adjustment: Curiosity, anxiety, panic, comfort. Guard against escaping by cat-proofing the room and closing the door securely. Most cats that escape within the first week in a new home will not come back.
- Signs of Comfort: Look for the 3 P's – purring, playing, and pooping. A happy cat comes out of hiding, purrs, plays with toys, and most importantly **eats!** Do not let a cat out of the room until she shows **all** the signs of being comfortable.

III. INTRODUCING THE CAT TO RESIDENT ANIMALS:

- No meeting other animals in the house for 10-14 days or they will risk infection.
- Other Cats: Introductions should start only after the new cat has settled in. You can introduce blankets or toys that the other cat has played with or feed them on opposite sides of a closed door so that they can get used to each other's scents before they meet face to face. Too quick a meeting with a resident cat may result in the resident cat rejecting the



HUMANE SOCIETY FOR BOONE COUNTY



PO BOX 708

877-473-6722 Lebanon IN 46052 hsforbc@gmail.com

new cat. Initial introductions should be brief (a few minutes at a time to start) and end on a good note. DO NOT force cats to interact. Simply open the door and let the cats casually meet.

- Dogs: should be confined or on leash until the dog can be trusted 100% not to chase the cat. The new cat should have a "safe zone" where the dog cannot go. This area should contain the litter box, food, and water. Letting the cat have some vertical space (like a cat tree) can also be very helpful. A baby gate lifted high enough off the floor so that the cat can go under but the dog cannot will also help. Never leave a dog alone with a new cat.

IV. FOOD

- Kittens: should be getting high quality dry kitten food with water available all day. They can have a little wet food (a teaspoon) a couple times a day.
- Cats: high quality dry or canned food or both (unless they have dietary restrictions).

V. LITTERBOXES

- Kittens: use a regular litterbox (make sure that they can climb in and out of it easily) and recommend non-clumping litter to start out.
- Cats: use a regular litterbox and unscented clumping litter to start.
- Before changing the box type, litter, or location of the litterbox, make sure that the cat is using the new litterbox setup before taking the old one away.

VI. SCRATCHING

- Scratching posts provide a healthy outlet for this natural behavior.
- Reward the cat with treats or toys for using the scratching post.
- Keep nails trimmed to a triangle (without the hook).
- Double-sided tape (Sticky Paws) on furniture can keep cats away.
- Soft Claws: plastic tips that go over the cat's nails prevent damage to furniture.

VII. INDOOR/OUTDOOR

- We strongly encourage you to keep cats indoor-only.
- Outdoor cats have much more potential to contract diseases, be injured, lost, or stolen.
- Create an enriching indoor environment to keep cats happy: lots of toys, perches, scratching posts, stimulation and exercise.

VIII. TOYS

- Kittens: are usually good at entertaining themselves but should learn how to play with appropriate toys. Do not encourage them to play with or swat at hands or fingers. Supervise your cat when playing with toys to make sure that they don't ingest pieces of the toy. Do not leave a cat unattended with string or thread. They can be deadly if ingested.
- Types of toys: Fishing pole toys are interactive and keep hands away from the cat's claws and teeth. Ping-Pong balls, toy mice, Kitty Kongs, etc.



HUMANE SOCIETY FOR BOONE COUNTY



PO BOX 708

877-473-6722 Lebanon IN 46052 hsforbc@gmail.com

- Adult Cats: Usually need more interactive play with their human companions. Catnip is good for adult cats but toys with catnip should not be left out because a cat will become immune to the effects after prolonged exposure to it.
- IX. KIDS
- Supervise interaction and teach safe handling. Children should never be left alone with a cat or kitten.
 - Cat bites can cause infection.
 - Make sure kids don't accidentally let the cat out, etc.
 - It is the adult, not the child, who is responsible for the care of the cat, i.e. cleaning the litter box, feeding, etc. Teach responsibility by example.
- X. CAT PROOFING
- Check screen doors and windows, doors that don't latch, chemicals, strings, holes in walls, cords, and poisonous plants.
- XI. VACCINATION AND MEDICAL HISTORY
- All animals receive age appropriate vaccinations and testing, dewormer, flea treatment, and are spay/neutered. Cost is included in the adoption fee.
- XII. SPECIAL CASES
- White Cats: indoor only, due to high risk of skin cancer and sun related burns.
 - Deaf Cats: indoor only, cannot alert to danger outside.
 - Semi-Feral or Under-socialized: indoor only- may spook outside and never come back.
 - Senior Cats: may need blood work, dentals, vet care more frequently.
 - Declawed Cats: indoor only, as they don't have all of their defenses.