

Introducing a New Cat to Your Home



Slower is better

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Cats take time to adjust to new surroundings. Some cats will adjust in a matter of minutes and others may take a few weeks to feel comfortable. Here are some behaviors you may notice:

First three days:

Hiding. Provide a safe quiet place for the cat to decompress when you first get the cat home. This could be a bathroom, spare bedroom, or just a quiet corner of the house with their crate or a box to hide in. Make sure their food, water, and litter box are nearby.

Eating. Adults may not eat the first few days until they start to get used to their surroundings. Make sure their food and water are accessible for when they decide to eat. Kittens need to eat within the first day but if they don't eat right after they get home don't worry.

Territorial. Hissing and growling is normal when scared and in a new environment. Give the cat space and time to decompress if they show these behaviors. If there are other animals in the home, make sure they have space away from each other until they get used to one another. Ideally introductions should not happen right away especially with adults, kittens adjust much faster. It is best to start adults by transferring smells first either using bedding or other objects with the other animals' scents on it. When bringing in a new animal, it is best to let the resident animals keep their space as is and keep the new cat/kitten in a separate space as to not upset the resident animals' routines.

Inappropriate elimination. Kittens may have accidents if they get over excited and forget where their box is. It's best to keep the kitten's world small to start with. Adults may have accidents if they are too scared, and their box is too far away. This may also be due to an unfamiliar type of litter box or litter. You may need to try different litter boxes or litter to find out what they will use.

First three weeks:

Cats are getting used to their new environment and routine. They are learning where everything is and what they can and can't do in their new house. Young kittens may still have occasional accidents if they get over excited and forget where their box is. Adults should not be having any inappropriate elimination purely due to the move. If there are still elimination issues than you may need to consider more litter boxes (especially in multi cat households) or different types of boxes or litter. Altercations with other pets should decrease as they get used to one another. If no improvement by the third week with proper slow introduction, they may not be able to live together, and you can return the cat to OFOSA.

First three months:

By the end of the first three months, most cats should be settled in and showing their normal relaxed behavior. They have learned their new routine and where they fit into their new family.

Other information:

Vet care:

We will provide illness care for the first two weeks after adoption for illnesses the animal may have been carrying while in our care. Common ailments in newly adopted cats are digestive upset or upper respiratory infections. If you notice any diarrhea or vomiting after adoption than can be caused by stress or change of food. Similarly, if you notice eye or nose discharge, stress and all the new scents can cause kitty cold symptoms. If any of these last more than a few days, please contact OFOSA at 503-747-7818 or for emergencies call Christy at 503-502-0031.

After the initial two weeks we suggest you schedule an appointment for your new cat within the first month to get established at a vet for care. It is best to get established at a vet early so they can help with vaccine schedules and be able to help if something were to come up with their health in the future.

Vaccines

All cats should have vaccines. We will provide age-appropriate vaccinations up until adoption. After adoption it is up to you to continue vaccinations. The vaccines they will receive from OFOSA are their Rabies if over 3 months/ 3 pounds and their complete FVRCP series if over 4 months old. If under 4 months old, they will need monthly vaccines until over 4 months old.

Kitten-Proofing

Kitten proofing is like child proofing. If there is anything you don't want the cat/kitten to get into make sure they can't get to it. The main things to look out for are:

- Plants (if you have plants, please look them up to see if they are poisonous. Cats will play with and possibly bite or eat the petals or leaves. The deadliest are lilies, even if they don't eat it, if pollen gets on their coats and they lick it, it can cause kidney failure)
- Chemicals (if cats come in contact with poisonous chemicals, they will then ingest it when they groom themselves)
- Medications (loose pills look like great toys and can be toxic if swallowed)
- Cords (power cords or cord for blinds, can be choking or shock hazards when cats play with them)
- Toilet (not only do they think it is a drinking bowl and make a mess, but small kittens can fall in and may not be able to get out, best to keep the lids closed if you have animals)
- Any small objects (if swallowed they can cause intestinal obstructions)

FIV/FelV INFORMATION AND TESTING

After careful consideration of recent research, veterinarian recommendations, and our own experience with this testing, OFOSA has made the decision not to test every cat that enters our rescue. We do test cats that are exhibiting signs of illness, bite injuries, or if there is known contact with positive cats.