

# Bringing Your New Cat Home



## ANIMAL OUTFITTERS

For the first week after adoption, our in-shelter store Animal Outfitters provides a 20% discount on all supplies.

## CAT BEHAVIOR INFORMATION

**Classes:** Marin Humane offers cat classes for first-time and experienced cat owners. You can sign up on our website: [MarinHumane.org](http://MarinHumane.org).

**Handouts:** Information on a wide variety of cat behavior topics is available at [MarinHumane.org](http://MarinHumane.org).

**Hotline:** Have a question about your cat's behavior? Call 415.506.6284 and speak to the Marin Humane Cat Behaviorist.

## Helping Your Cat Adjust to His New Home

Changing territories is difficult for most cats. Initially place your cat's food, water, scratching post, bed, litter box, and toys in a small quiet room in the house. For shy kittens and cats, a bathroom where they cannot get under the bed or dresser is recommended. When your cats come to you when you open the door and are eating and using the litter box, they are ready to explore a slightly larger space. Spend a lot of time with your cats in their "quiet" room.

It is not unusual for a new cat to hide. Having a lot of territory to worry about makes them scared. **Be patient.** Adult cats can take several weeks to adjust to this change of environment.

Because of our urban/open space interface, Marin Humane recommends that cats live indoors only. Many cats lose their lives because of coyotes and cars. At the very least, they should be kept indoors until they are six months old. When you bring a new kitty home, they should stay indoors for at least two months. Outdoor cat enclosures, or "catios," are a great way for cats to safely enjoy outdoor living.

**Special Kitten Instructions:** Keep windows closed and secure the screens. Check to make sure toilet lids are closed and string, yarn, and other small objects are stored out of reach. Check washing machines and dryers before closing them. Window blind cords should be tied off. With kittens running about, it's a good idea to make a habit of looking before you step. Kittens under 5 months old should not use clumping clay litter because their systems cannot digest it if accidentally swallowed.

**Pet Introductions:** Pet introductions should not begin until your new kitten/cat feels comfortable in their territory (i.e. they come to you when you open the door, they are eating, and using the litter box). Take this time to introduce your animals by smell. Pairing the scent of the resident animal with a yummy treat for your new kitty and vice versa is the first step for introductions. Rub a sock on one animal and let the other one sniff it while getting a treat. Introducing animals can take weeks or months and, with cats, slowly is definitely the way to go. For more information, see our handouts on introducing cats and/or dogs.

**Poisons:** For a list of toxic items, go to <http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>. The poison control hotline for animals is **888.426.4435**.

**Microchip:** Your cat has a microchip implanted under the skin, between his/her shoulder blades. At the time of adoption, the number is registered to you with the contact information you provided. Please notify Marin Humane and your microchip company if any of your contact information changes.

All MHS felines are treated for fleas, worms and ear mites when they enter the shelter. Indoor-only cats typically do not need additional parasite treatment.

**Fleas:** Speak with your vet and get started on monthly topical flea control.

**Tapeworms:** These are transmitted to your cat when an infected flea is ingested. Segments of the worm can be seen in your cat's stool or bedding (they look like pieces of white rice). If your cat has worms, please see your vet for medication. Over the counter products are not recommended.

**Ear mites:** Evidence of this small parasite is seen as a dark, waxy discharge (or something that looks like coffee grounds) from the ears and head shaking or ear scratching. Please consult your vet for the best ways to treat or prevent ear mites.

**Vaccinations:** Your pet may need additional vaccinations or boosters after adoption. Please consult your vet to get your new companion on a regular vaccination program.

**Diet:** We will let you know what your cat/kitten has been eating while in our care. If you wish to transition your cat to a new food, it's best to wait until your cat is acclimated to it's new home and to transition slowly over the course of at least a week.

Please do not over-feed your cat. Obesity is one of the most troubling health challenges in companion animals. Generally, for cats with a weight issue, wet food is recommended.

**Post adoption vet care:** Marin Humane partners with several area clinics to provide some limited post-adoption medical care within the first 14 days of adoption. If your cat/kitten becomes ill—issues with the spay/neuter site, upper respiratory distress, diarrhea, or vomiting—please contact one of the clinics on the handout provided. Please note that the 14 days of post-adoption veterinary care is limited to *only those clinics on the list you were provided*.

**Grooming:** Some breeds of cats, primarily medium-to-long-haired, require regular grooming. All cats benefit from regular brushing of the coat, and teeth cleaning as recommended by your vet.

**Behavior:** The Cat Behavior office can be reached at 415.506.6284 or [catbehavior@MarinHumane.org](mailto:catbehavior@MarinHumane.org). Please contact us with any questions about your cat's behavior. Consultations and classes are available.



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