



**ADOPTED**

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A WELCOME HOME GUIDE

# Welcome

## TO THE VBSPCA FAMILY

Congratulations on adopting a new feline friend!

In the following pages you will find helpful information designed to support your new pet's transition into a new home environment. The first few days and weeks are critical, so please read this booklet carefully to be sure you are setting them up for success.

Thank you for adopting and supporting our mission of eliminating animal suffering while increasing human compassion. We're happy to have you as part of our VBSPCA family.

## Essential Items

Everything your cat needs to get settled in their new home

- Food & Water Dishes
- Scratching Post
- Food
- Pet Carrier
- Treats
- Collar & ID Tag
- Litter Box
- Litter
- Toys



## Did You Know?

Many of the items on this list are available for purchase at the VBSPCA Pet Retail Store located inside the shelter. All proceeds support the homeless animals of the VBSPCA.

### **Need to order pet supplies online?**

Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select the Virginia Beach SPCA as your beneficiary. Amazon will donate 0.5% of every eligible purchase back to the shelter.

# Basic Feline Care



## Food & Water

Your cat was sent home with a bag of Purina One cat food, the same food they enjoyed during their time at the shelter. We recommend using the same brand of food at home or transition slowly to another high quality food. You should follow all feeding instructions provided on the packaging or as directed by your veterinarian.

Cats should be fed twice a day as free feeding can lead to obesity. Any food that has not been eaten within 24 hours should be thrown away and replaced with fresh food.

Fresh water should always be readily available to your cat. Food and water dishes should be cleaned daily.

If changing brands of food, It's best to change your pet's diet gradually and systematically.



**PURINA**  
Shelter Champions



### **The Comforts of Home**

Just like humans, cats need a place to eat, sleep, and go to the bathroom. Be sure to provide them with a bed or blankets to sleep on, a quiet place to eat, and a litter box. You'll find additional litter box information on page 7.



### **Toys & Enrichment**

A busy cat is a happy cat. Providing toys and playing with your cat helps keep them physically and mentally healthy. You'll find more information on the importance of play on page 10.



### **Grooming**

Most cats groom themselves and stay relatively clean, but all cats should be brushed regularly - especially long-haired cats. Brushing keeps your cat's coat clean, reduces shedding, and cuts down on hairballs.



### **Veterinary Care**

Follow up with all scheduled veterinary appointments as directed by your adoption counselor. Additionally, your cat should see a veterinarian once per year for an exam and vaccinations. Seek medical care immediately if your pet is sick or injured.

**Upper respiratory infections are especially common for recently adopted animals. If your cat is sneezing, coughing, or having trouble breathing within the first 10 days of being adopted from the VBSPCA, bring your pet to the shelter to be checked out free of charge. Please check your adoption paperwork for current adoption referral hours.**

# Safe Space

Your home will be full of unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells, which may be stressful to your newly adopted cat. Providing a safe, quiet space will be extremely helpful as they adjust to their new environment.

This safe space should be set up in a quiet room such as a bathroom or bedroom. Place their litter box on one end of the room and their food and water on the other end. Make sure you provide a few blankets and a bed too. We recommend using this safe space in the evenings and when you are not at home.

If there are other animals in the home, this safe space will be of critical importance as you don't want to introduce new pets to resident pets too quickly. More information on introductions can be found on page 8.



## Rule of 3

This is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.



### 3 Days

To Decompress

- Feels overwhelmed, afraid, or unsure
- May not be comfortable enough to be confident
- May not want to eat or drink
- May shut down or hide



### 3 Weeks

To Learn Your Routine

- Feels more comfortable
- Figures out their environment and gets into a routine
- Starts showing their personality
- Possibly shows some behavioral issues



### 3 Months

To Start Feeling at Home

- Finally feels comfortable in their new home
- Begins to build trust and forms a bond with you
- Has a sense of security with your family
- Sets into your routine

# Litter Box 101

## Setting Your Cat Up for Success

- Have at least one litter box per cat; consider having one litter box on each level of the home
- Place the litter box in a place that gives your cat privacy but is also easily accessible
- Most cats prefer unscented, clumping litter
- The box should have approximately two inches of litter
- Scoop the litter box daily, and change the litter as needed (non-clumping 1-2 times per week; clumping 1-2 times per month)
- Wash the litter box with soap and water once a month

### Litter Box Issues

Sometimes cats go to the bathroom outside of their litter box, and this can often be linked to a medical issue such as a urinary tract infection. Stress or anxiety can also be the cause. Visit your veterinarian to help identify the source of the problem.



# Pet-to-Pet Introductions

Introducing your new pet to other pets in the home should be a gradual process. Slow introductions are critical in establishing successful relationships, as they help prevent fearful, territorial, or aggressive behavior. Every pet's time frame is different, so please be patient.

## Keep Pets Separate

Keep your new pet confined to their safe space.

Feed your pets on either side of the door to the safe space so they can get used to each other's scents and associate them with something positive (food). Start off with the food bowls a little farther away from the door, and gradually move them closer as your pets become more comfortable.

## Swap Scents

Swap blankets and beds between your pets. Rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the other's food dish. Do not swap items between two pets if one of them is sick.

## Switch Spaces

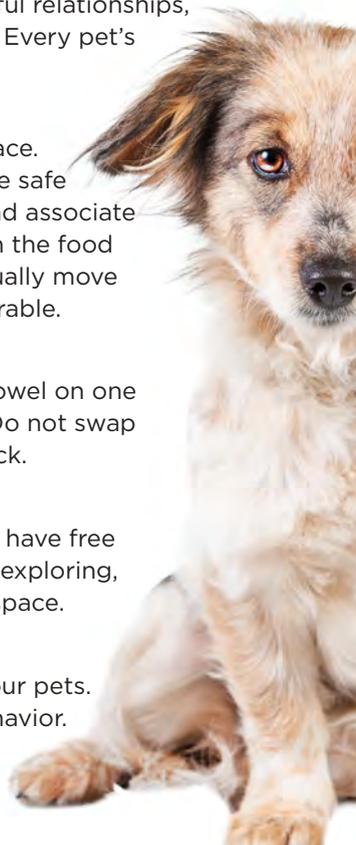
Once your new pet is feeling comfortable, let them have free time in the rest of the home. While your new pet is exploring, place your resident pets in the new pet's safe space.

## Supervised Meetings

Facilitate short, supervised meetings between your pets.

Increase their time together based on their behavior.

If your pets become fearful or aggressive during these interactions, separate them and start back at the first step.



If you are introducing your new cat to a dog, work with your canine to make sure they know commands such as sit, down, come, and stay.

# Keeping Your Cat **Safe**



## **Keep Your Cat Indoors**

Indoor cats can live up to 6 years longer than outdoor cats. That's because indoor cats are not exposed to sickness or predators, and they are less likely to be lost, stolen, or injured.

## **Make Sure Your Cat is Carrying ID**

Even indoor cats need to wear a collar and ID tag with your current contact information. If your cat accidentally gets out, it is important that whoever finds him is able to contact you.

## **Update Your Cat's Microchip Information**

Your cat was microchipped before leaving our shelter. It is important to register your pet with the microchip company and keep your pet's file updated with current contact information. Your adoption counselor provided you with instructions on how to update your pet's microchip information.

## **Prevent Pet Poisoning**

Everyday items found inside and outside your home can be toxic to animals. Download the Animal Poison by ASPCA app so that you can easily reference whether a particular item is poisonous to your pet.

## Enriching Your Cat's Life

Cats need to play, scratch, hunt, hide, and have social interaction to be happy. By providing your new pet with enrichment items, you will keep them physically and mentally stimulated - and out of trouble!

**Toys:** Give your cat a variety of toys such as wand toys, crinkle toys, balls, lasers, and catnip toys.

**Food/Treat Dispensers:** Puzzle toys and other dispensers keep your cat occupied and reward them for their efforts.

**Scratching Posts:** Cats scratch to clean their nails and mark territory. By giving them an appropriate place to scratch, you can teach them to leave furniture and other inappropriate items alone.

**Cat Towers:** Cats love to use towers as a safe place to sleep or to look outside or around the home.

**Structured Play:** Playing with your cat every day is as important as feeding him every day. Try games that simulate hunting, like using a wand toy and letting your cat grab, pounce on, and capture it.



Even appropriately sized toys can be hazardous because of the way they are made. Be sure to supervise your pet with any toy that could become a choking hazard.

# VBSPCA

3040 HOLLAND ROAD, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23453

For additional information to help you care for your pet,  
visit our online Pet Care Resources Center at

**[vbspca.com/pet-care-resources](https://vbspca.com/pet-care-resources)**