

Cat Owner's Manual



The Humane Society of Jefferson County

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Bringing Home Your Cat or Kitten

So you've picked out your cat or kitten, now what? Let the fun begin!

- 🐾 **Setup a Room** - Before you get home with your new cat, have a room setup for them. This should ideally be a small room with an easily cleaned floor, and one that can be closed off from the rest of the house if needed. Provide a bed, a litter box, food and water (not near the litter box), items for scratching, and safe toys.
- 🐾 **Vet Visit** - Soon after the cat arrives in your home, take the cat to the veterinarian for an exam, feeding recommendations, and any vaccinations. Use a cat carrier for transporting your cat, both for its safety and a sense of security. The carrier should become "standard operating procedure" during any trips away from home.
- 🐾 **Set a Schedule** - If the new arrival is still a kitten, initiate a schedule of feeding, playing, and handling to provide the kitten with the structure of regular activities. Turning on a small nightlight will be their cue that it is time for bed and will also help them navigate the room during the night. Be sensitive to the kitten's need for sleep and watch that children let the kitten sleep undisturbed when they're tired out.
- 🐾 **Handle Your Kitten** - Make sure to handle a kitten gently and frequently for short periods of time. During these sessions, slowly incorporate touching around the eyes, ears, paws, etc. as if doing a veterinary exam. This time of socializing helps your kitten learn what's normal and makes it easier to groom and cut nails as they get older.
- 🐾 **Gradually Expand the Territory** - As your kitten or cat grows more used to their environment, begin to gradually let them explore more adjoining rooms under your watchful eye.
- 🐾 **Secure Dangerous Areas** - Be prepared for your cat's sense of adventure and curiosity. Secure dangerous areas like the dryer and washing machine for their safety. Make sure to keep any poisons or chemicals locked away and double check that all plants in the house are pet safe. Direct the cat to acceptable play and scratch items and away from unacceptable ones. For kittens under three months of age, supervised play is best in areas where they can't hurt or damage anything that is valuable to you.
- 🐾 **Make Friends** - The more you involve other animals and people in interactions with your cat, the more likely they will respond without fear or defensiveness as they grow older.

Remember that kittens grow up very fast. Patience and persistence in the early months will pay off later. And never forget to have fun! That's what kittens do best.

Introducing Your New Cat to Your Other Pets

It's important to have realistic expectations when introducing a new pet. Cats are territorial and need to be introduced to other animals very slowly in order to give them the time to get used to each other. Some cats are also more social than other cats. Slow introductions help prevent negative interactions that can make it harder to develop lasting relationships between your pets.

FIRST WEEK

- 🐾 **Confinement** - Confine your new cat to one room with her litter box, food, water, and a bed for one week. Your resident pets will know there is a newcomer in the house and will become accustomed to their scent long before they see each other.
- 🐾 **Signs and Symptoms Check** - First week isolation also ensures that the new cat/kitten is not incubating a virus that could spread to your resident pets. After one week has passed with no signs of illness (sneezing, sniffing, runny eyes, or diarrhea) continue with the introduction.

FOLLOWING WEEKS

- 🐾 **Swap Scents** - Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident animals so they have a chance to become more accustomed to each other's scent.
- 🐾 **Switch Living Areas** - Give your new cat free time in the house while confining your other animals to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.
- 🐾 **Avoid Fearful & Aggressive Meetings** - Avoid or halt any interactions between your pets that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become habit they are far more difficult to change. Mild forms of these behaviors may occur, but don't give them the chance to get worse. If this happens, separate them and start over with small steps.

PRECAUTIONS

- 🐾 **Regular Schedules** - Try to keep your resident pets' schedules as close as possible to what it was before your newcomer arrived, this helps makes new introductions less stressful on your pets.
- 🐾 **Stopping a Fight** - Cats can make a lot of noise, pull hair, and roll around without being injured. If small fights like this occur, don't intervene directly, instead make a noise, squirt some water, or throw a pillow to separate the cats.
- 🐾 **Calming Down** - If a fight does occur, give each cat a chance to calm down and a safe hiding spot before re-introducing them again.

Cat and Dog Interactions

Dogs and cats live together in thousands of households, but extra precautions should always be taken when introducing new pet cats and dogs. Supervision should take place for all new interactions and some dogs have such a high prey drive, that they can never be left alone with a cat. In addition to the instructions on the previous page, other tips for cat and dog interactions include:

- 🐾 **Practice Obedience** - If your dog doesn't already know the commands, "sit," "down," "come," and "stay," you should begin working on them. Small pieces of food will often increase your dog's motivation, which is even more important when you add in the distraction of a new cat.
- 🐾 **Controlled Meetings** - After your pets have been exposed to each other's scents, you can attempt a supervised face-to-face interaction. Put on your dog's leash and using treats have him sit or lie down. Have another helper with your cat on the far side of the room with some special food or catnip. Don't restrain the cat and monitor each pet's behavior. Lots of short visits are better than longer visits, especially if either pet becomes agitated. Keep repeating these meetings until each pet is able to tolerate the other's presence without fear, aggression, or negative behaviors.
- 🐾 **Let Your Cat Go** - Allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at its own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down" position. Keep giving your dog treats and praise for calm behavior. If the dog gets up, it should be repositioned. If the cat runs away or becomes aggressive, stop the interaction and go back to the previous steps.
- 🐾 **Positive Reinforcement** - Give your new cat free time in the house while confining your other animals to the new cat's room. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.
- 🐾 **Direct Supervision** - During the introduction process it's a good idea to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house. Make sure your cat always has an escape route and a place to hide, and keep your pets separated when you aren't home.

KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Because kittens are so much smaller, they're at even greater risk from an overly playful or mouthy dog. Kittens should be kept mostly separate from dogs until they're full grown. If you have a puppy in your house, most cats are comfortable putting a puppy in its place, but some cats might not have the confidence to do that and may need to be kept separate.

If introductions don't go smoothly, seek help right away. Animals can be injured in fights, and the longer a problem goes on the harder it is to resolve.

Feeding Your Adult Cat

Cats have sometimes had the reputation for being finicky eaters. Usually this isn't their nature, it's how we feed them. The more variety a cat is offered, the more likely they will develop picky eating habits. The best recommendation is to find a quality, balanced food your cat likes, and stick to it.

- 🐾 **Set a Routine** - Feed your cat at the same time(s) and in the same place every day.
- 🐾 **Set Amount** - The average 7-9 pound cat with normal activities requires one 8-ounce cup of dry or semi-moist food per day.
- 🐾 **Monitor Condition** - Use feeding instructions as a guideline but monitor your cat's weight and overall look to avoid overfeeding.
- 🐾 **Special Dietary Needs** - If you're feeding a cat special foods to promote urinary tract health, it is important for that food to be available free-to-eat all day long.

AVOID PEOPLE FOOD

We often love to give our pets special treats and sometimes even give them "people food" or table scraps. In general you want to avoid doing this because it can lead to a variety of health issues including obesity. Specific "treat" foods that should be avoided include:

- 🐾 **Raw Eggs** - Can cause a deficiency of vitamins which leads to dermatitis and poor growth
- 🐾 **Certain Raw Fish** - Can cause vitamin deficiencies
- 🐾 **Raw Meat** - May contain parasites and does not completely meet nutritional needs
- 🐾 **Raw Liver** - Can be toxic
- 🐾 **Bones** - Especially pork or poultry bones, can splinter and get lodged in the throat or mouth

DON'T FORGET THE WATER

Water is a critical need for any living creature. It's very important for the health of your cat that fresh drinking water in a clean bowl is available at all times throughout the day and night.



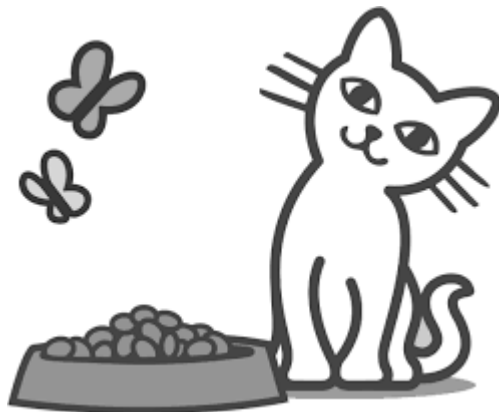
Feeding Your Kitten

Kittens have special nutritional needs for their growth, so look for kitten food that's specially formulated to provide the necessary extra protein, vitamins, and minerals that they need. When feeding your kitten, some other tips to remember are:

- 🐾 **Set a Routine** - Feed your kitten at the same time(s) and in the same place every day.
- 🐾 **Keep it Clean** - Cleaning food and water dishes regularly helps keep your pet healthy. Plastic dishes are more easily scratched which harbors bacteria. It's best to use metal or porcelain dishes that are easy to clean.
- 🐾 **Kitten Specific** - Kittens should not be fed cat, dog, or puppy food. Kittens have special nutritional needs that are not able to be met by these products.
- 🐾 **No Cow's Milk** - If you're feeding a very small kitten, use Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR). Cow's milk is not easily digested and can cause diarrhea.
- 🐾 **Water** - Always keep fresh water available for your kitten.

PREPARING FOOD

You can moisten your kitten's food with one part warm water to four parts dry kitten food, or add a teaspoon of wet kitten food to dry kibble to encourage him or her to eat. Use recommended feeding guidelines on your kitten food bag as a starting point for how much to feed your kitten. Dry kitten kibble should be available to your kitten at all times.



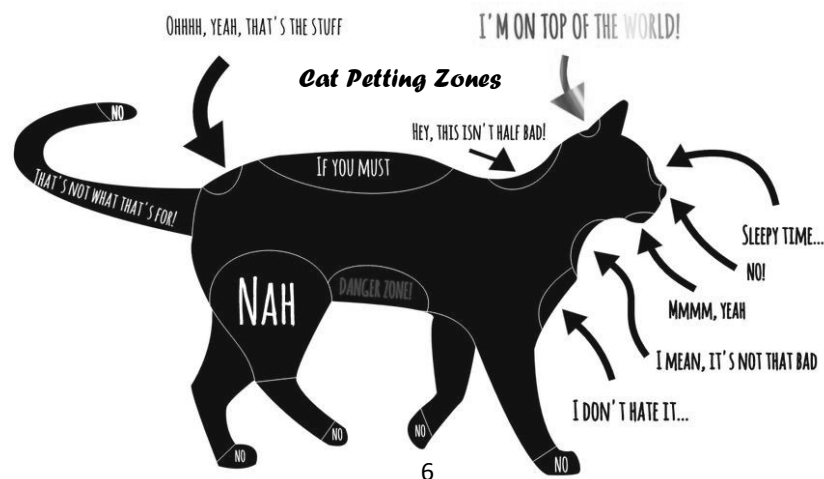
Handling Your Cat

At some point in their lives, every cat will need a good brushing, a nail trim, or some medication. For cats that are not as cooperative there are a number of techniques that can be helpful:

- 🐾 **Practice Right Away** - If you have the chance, starting to practice by massaging teeth, gums, ears, and paws on a kitten makes them more acclimated to these activities as an adult.
- 🐾 **Introduce New Activities** - Just like introducing new pets, new activities should be introduced slowly, and one at a time. Practice for a few minutes a day and stop or slow down if you experience negative behaviors.
- 🐾 **Use Positive Reinforcement** - Use treats, praise, and petting to let your pet know you approve of their tolerant behavior. Never scold or make these interactions negative.
- 🐾 **Check Your Body Language** - Pets are especially responsive to our body language, if you're nervous, skittish, or sympathetic, your cat can pick up on the change in body language. Keep things business-like throughout the process.
- 🐾 **Watch Your Pet's Body Language** - Be sensitive to your cats reactions. If your cat is becoming irritated (tense body, flattened ears, twitching tail, hissing) don't try to keep holding them down. Try again later to try and keep training to short, positive sessions.
- 🐾 **Ask Your Vet** - You can also ask your veterinarian to show or describe techniques for giving your cat a pill, liquid medication, or eye/ear drops. Be patient, gentle, and firm when giving medications.

BIGGER TASKS

Sometimes a cat just needs a lot of work done and it might not be best to try to put them through small or irritating sessions. For example, if your cat's coat is badly matted, consider giving yourself and the cat a fresh start by having the cat shaved at a groomers and then maintaining their coat as it grows back.



Litterbox Training 101

Training your cat to use a litter box is an important step in their behavior. Feline behaviorists find that inconsistent litter box use tops the list of behavior problems and is a major reason cats are surrendered to shelters. Cats in shelters may have different levels of experience with litterboxes, but most will use a litter box under the right conditions:

- 🐾 **Keep it Clean** - Regularly cleaning out a litter box is good for your cat's health and encourages them to continue using their litter box space. Regularly changing out your litter box with hot water and dish soap will keep it clean and fresh.
- 🐾 **Keep it Private** - Just like us, cats like a little privacy when using their facilities. Putting the litter box in more secluded rooms or areas will encourage them to use the space.
- 🐾 **Select the Right Location** - Litterboxes should be easily accessible for the cat and also offer escape potential so your cat feels safe enough to use the box regularly.
- 🐾 **A More Natural Setting** - Consider what a wild cat would look for in a bathroom space. Soft rakeable substrate, no artificial fragrances, no liners, and plenty of room to do all the sniffing, digging, squatting, and turning around required for their business.
- 🐾 **The Best Size** - Select a litter box that is at least 16" x 22". The sides can be six-inches deep unless the litter box is for a kitten or handicapped cat. Some of the best litterboxes are not sold in pet stores, but are labeled as "all-purpose tubs" in hardware stores.
- 🐾 **Getting Messy** - If your cat likes to throw the litter out of the box, or overshoots the box, putting the litter box inside of another larger cardboard or high-sided storage box can help contain the mess.
- 🐾 **Covers and Hoods** - Owners sometimes like hooded or covered boxes because they contain the mess, but cats usually find these cramped and smelly, and may stop using them.
- 🐾 **Multiple Boxes** - Feline behaviorists have identified the ideal number of litterboxes as the number of cats plus +1. Even if there is one cat in the home, the ideal number of boxes would be 2.
- 🐾 **A Little Light** - Cats see better in the dark than we do, but can't see any better in total darkness. Adding a little night light can be helpful if the litter box is in a basement or dark room.
- 🐾 **Quiet Spaces** - Loud noises like a furnace, clothes dryer, or thunderstorm can make a cat feel unsafe about being in their litter box. Make sure to choose a spot where your cat can feel safe.
- 🐾 **The Right Litter** - Cats prefer unscented, absorbent litter that clumps together. Clumping litter should not be used for kittens as there is a risk they will eat the particles.
- 🐾 **Litter Depth** - A litter depth of about 3 inches is satisfactory. Any less, and the litter may stick to the bottom of the litter box. 3 inches is about the length of your index finger.

Appropriate Toys for Your Cat

Cats are intelligent creatures and they need stimulation. Toys make a great addition to your cat's enrichment and appropriate toys are a safe, fun way to help your cat's playful nature. When selecting appropriate toys for your cat or kitten, think in terms of what would be safe for a human toddler.

- 🐾 **Size** - If it can be swallowed, it is dangerous. Backward pointing barbs on a cat's tongue make it difficult for cats to remove items from their mouth.
- 🐾 **Small Bits** - String, yarn, floss, ribbon, twine, rubber bands, small bells, and other detachable small items can all be swallowed and may cause severe injury. Check toys for unsecure or glued on parts that might easily come off and harm your cat.
- 🐾 **Check the Eyes!** - Eyes on cat toys can be especially prone to being detached. Make sure to check any eyes that are glued, tacked, or added on to an item.
- 🐾 **Supervise Playtime** - Even toys, like milk bottle rings, that might be safe for some cats, could be harmful for heavy chewers. Make sure to supervise cat playtime, especially with new toys.

DIY TOYMAKING

It's not necessary to spend a fortune at the pet store to please your cat. Some of the most popular toys are freebies or homemade items. The centers of toilet paper, tape, even large nuts in their shell can all be used for cat batting practice. Some other DIY toys you can try are:

- 🐾 **Lightweight Plastic** - Plastic rings that hold down milk jugs are great for sliding along the floor
- 🐾 **Paper** - Many cats love "catch and kill" games where they chase small objects across the room, these can even be balled up tissue or wax paper.
- 🐾 **Ping Pong** - Ping pong balls are just larger than your cat's mouth, making them a safe and fun mouse-sized toy to chase down.
- 🐾 **Socks** - Socks make a great container for cat entertainment. They can be stuffed with cotton balls or catnip and tied off to make a safe and squishy playmate for your cat.
- 🐾 **Hideouts** - Cats love hideouts, from paper bags to cardboard boxes, these throwaway items can be turned into fun playhouses for your feline friend. Just remember, no plastic bags!



Helpful Hints and Tips

Cats are amazing, loveable creatures who can provide endless entertainment and companionship. We should never forget though, that cats are also animals and need special care suited to their nature to keep them healthy and happy in our homes. Here are a few tips to remember to help you care for your cat:

- 🐾 **Cats are Independent** - Cats are independent by nature. Some cats love to sit for pettings, some cats prefer their solitude, some cats like both but will give you some “cattitude” now and then.
- 🐾 **Cats Don’t Need Milk** - If you have a kitten, there are some products like KMR that are helpful to keep them growing healthy and happy, but most cats are lactose intolerant and shouldn’t be given regular cow’s milk.
- 🐾 **Vet Care = Healthy Cat** - Even if you have an indoor cat, keeping them up to date on vaccinations, parasite prevention, and having regular checkups goes a long way to having a long-lived cat.
- 🐾 **Declawing HURTS!** - Even though it seems like a quick way to deal with scratching problems, declawing involves cutting off a cat’s toes and can cause a host of other problems.
- 🐾 **Start a Routine Early** - The faster you get into a routine and get your cat used to grooming, nail clipping, and bathing, the easier it will be to do these activities long term.
- 🐾 **Choose the Right Food** - Cats are obligate carnivores. That means they require meat protein in order to live. Foods with large amounts of grain fillers are often lower quality and aren’t as good for your cat.
- 🐾 **Find a Good Vet** - Nothing beats having a veterinarian you trust and who knows your cat. Shop around for a good vet who spends some time getting to know you and your pet.
- 🐾 **Go Vertical** - Cats like heights and places where they can climb to safely to observe their surroundings. Having higher places available in your house is comforting to your cat and adds some variety to their environment.
- 🐾 **Independent Doesn’t Mean Alone** - Even if your cat isn’t an every-day affectionate, that doesn’t mean they don’t need time with their family. Make time to play or just sit with your cat and you’ll have a loving companion for life!



How to Correct Your Cat

Directly correcting or punishing your cat only results in your cat associating you with punishment. That means they will continue doing behaviors you don't like when you're not there or worse, will feel threatened by you and may bite and/or scratch to protect themselves.

- 🐾 **Only Punish in the Moment** - Negative corrections work best when the cat knows or associates the punishment with the activity that they were doing. Never try to provide any sort of punishment if you don't catch your cat in the act.
- 🐾 **Remote Corrections** - Let the environment, not you, convince the cat that what they're doing is the wrong thing. Remote corrections are tools that can deter your cat from an area or behavior without you having to make the correction in person. This includes things like solid air fresheners (especially citrus scent), vinyl carpet runners turned upside down (semi-sharp plastic points), double-sided tape, or foil/contact paper.
- 🐾 **Loud Noises** - If you can see your cat behaving badly or jumping somewhere they're not supposed to go, banging on a wall, throwing a noisy coin-filled soda can, or creating another loud, startling sound while hidden from sight, can be a helpful way to provide negative reinforcement.
- 🐾 **Spray Bottles** - Spray bottles filled with water can sometimes be a helpful deterrent if you're able to spray your cat from a distance. When spraying, don't correct your cat verbally at the same time as this helps associate the spray bottle with you.

The best way to deal with many unwanted behaviors is to help prevent them in the first place. Make sure you're following all of the tips for litter box usage and scratching. Also make sure to see your veterinarian for any new or concerning behaviors that may be related to your cat's health.



Working With Destructive Scratching

Declawing is justly being declared inhumane in a growing number of places and nearly 1/4 of all veterinarians have already stopped performing the procedure due to the pain and long-term problems it can cause for the cat. That means we need to look at new ways of protecting our cats (and our furniture!) from destructive scratching behaviors. First it helps to understand why cats scratch:

- 🐾 **Claw Maintenance** - Scratching helps cats remove the dead outer layer of their claws, it also helps wear down overgrown claws
- 🐾 **Marking Territory** - Cats have scent glands in their paws, so scratching helps to both visually mark their territory and to leave their scent marker
- 🐾 **Burning Energy** - Cats need exercise just like we do and scratching is a natural and comfortable way to burn some energy
- 🐾 **Streeetttcchhhh!** - Scratching high up allows a cat to get in a big stretch, part of their natural behavioral needs

CORRECTING DESTRUCTIVE SCRATCHING

Now that we know why cats need to scratch, we can look at a number of different solutions that can help get your cat to scratch more appropriate items:

- 🐾 **Provide Scratching Options** - Cats need to scratch, so the first line of defense is making sure they have appropriate items to scratch on. Stores sell a number of different products from scratch pads, to posts, and other scratch-friendly objects. All shelter cages have cardboard cat scratchers that our cats will be used to using.
- 🐾 **Provide Alternatives** - If your cat is scratching your couch, drapes, or other inappropriate items, find appropriate substitutes that match what they're already looking to use.
 - Where is the object located? Put the replacement in the same place
 - What texture does it have (soft, coarse, thick)? Match the texture and weight
 - What shape is the object (horizontal, vertical, wide, thin)? Find similar objects
 - How tall is the item? Find scratch substitutes that are the right height for your cat
- 🐾 **Secure Items** - Make sure the new items you provide are stable or secured to a surface, if they fall over they may startle your cat and scare them away from using the replacement
- 🐾 **Suitable Locations** - When you are successful at getting your cat to scratch the correct item, it can be moved **very gradually** (no more than 3 inches each day). This lets you move the item to a more suitable location. It is best however, to keep the appropriate scratching objects as close as possible to your cat's preferred scratching location.

Correcting Destructive Scratching

- 🐾 **Cover Protected Items** - Cover items you don't want scratched with something your cat finds unappealing. Double sided tape, aluminum foil, plastic carpet runner are good options. You can also use scents that are unappealing to your cat to keep them away from protected objects.
- 🐾 **Back to Normal** - Don't remove unappealing coverings or scents from protected items until your cat is consistently using the appropriate scratching objects at their permanent location for several weeks, or even a month.

NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT - PUNISHMENT

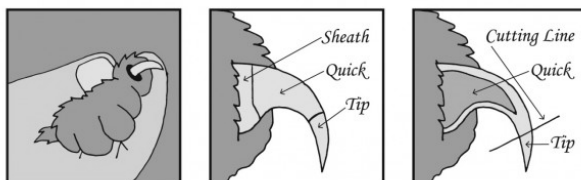
Negative punishments are often counterproductive to teaching cats good behavior and may make your cat fearful of you or cause them to bite or scratch. If you do need to use negative reinforcement, make sure to:

- 🐾 **Only Punish in the Moment** - Punishment is only effective if you catch your cat in the act.
- 🐾 **No Association** - If your cat directly associates you with the punishment it can make them see you as the reason behind the punishment rather than the scratching. Try to provide the punishment in a way that is less connected with you, making noise, squirt bottles, or a loud soda can close by.

TRIMMING CLAWS

Keeping your cat's claws trimmed is a safe and humane way to control scratching behavior. It's also a regular part of keeping your cat healthy.

- 🐾 **Starting Out** - Before trimming your cat's claws, you can help your cat get accustomed to having their paws handled and squeezed. Regularly gently pet the legs and paws while giving a treat. Over time, increase pressure with gentle squeezing to extend the claws.
- 🐾 **How Often?** - Ideally you can be clipping the sharp tips off of your cat's front feet every two weeks or so. Until your cat gets used to trimmings, you may have to do only one paw at a time.
- 🐾 **How To?** - Apply a small amount of pressure to your cat's paw with your thumb on top of the paw and your index finger underneath, until the claw is extended. With the claw extended you should be able to see the white-ish nail and the pink-ish "quick." Never cut into the pink portion as it will bleed and be painful. Just cut the sharp tip of the claw.
- 🐾 **Best Tools** - There are several types of claw trimmers designed specially for cats. These are better than your own nail clippers because they won't crush the claw.



Solving Litterbox Problems

Cats are pre-programmed to seek out an easily diggable substance where they can do their bathroom business. Even just placing them in a litter box after a big meal usually means their instincts take over. If the cat is not selecting the litter box as its preferred area, it generally means something is wrong. There may be a health-related concern, or your cat may be associating the litter box with a painful or fearful event and avoid it. ***If your cat isn't using its litter box, it's advisable to first rule out health problems by taking your cat to your veterinarian.*** Other considerations include:

- 🐾 **Spaying/Neutering** - Unfixed cats have a greater likelihood of spraying urine to mark their territory. If your cat is urine marking, spaying or neutering will stop this behavior 90-95% of the time.
- 🐾 **Accidents Near the Litterbox** - If it isn't a health related concern, and your cat is eliminating near the litter box, it may indicate an intent to use the space, but didn't like the condition. Make sure your litter box is cleaned with hot water and soap and contains fresh, unscented litter.
- 🐾 **No Surprises** - Cats like a familiar setting where they feel safe. If you recently changed litters, or moved your litter box, it may have disrupted her expectations. Try to keep things consistent.
- 🐾 **No Scents** - As much as we might like them, cats prefer to use unscented cat litter. If you are buying or adding fragrance to your litter try removing that from the equation.
- 🐾 **Deterrents** - Is your cat regularly using a specific area outside of the litter box? If so you may want to try adding fragrance or perfume to these areas to keep them away.
- 🐾 **Multiple Boxes** - Feline behaviorists have identified the ideal number of litterboxes as the number of cats plus +1. Even if there is one cat in the home, the ideal number of boxes would be 2.
- 🐾 **Covers and Hoods** - Owners sometimes like hooded or covered boxes because they contain the mess, but cats usually find these cramped and smelly, and may stop using them. The same goes for box liners, or odd litter types like crystal.
- 🐾 **Clean Accidents Completely** - If your cat has an accident outside of its box, make sure to thoroughly clean the area and use specialized enzyme cleaners to remove the smell so the area doesn't remind them of a bathroom zone.
- 🐾 **Outside Influence** - If you're finding accidents near a door or window, it may be that your cat is marking its territory from an outdoor cat who keeps coming around.
- 🐾 **Don't Ignore Stress** - Many cats respond to stressful situations with litter box problems. Take notice of changes in the household, less time for your pet, or new animals. Even long-time companions may begin having more competition for food or space that can cause these problems.

Don't forget about your veterinarian. Many litter box problems are caused by pain or discomfort that can be related to a medical concern with your cat.

Dealing with Cat Allergies

Being allergic to a cat doesn't necessarily mean you can't have a pet or that you must give up the one you have. By learning more about how pets impact your allergies, you can learn more about the best ways to deal with these issues and keep loving your pet.

- 🐾 **Allergies** - Allergic reactions are caused by allergens, substances too small to be seen like pollen, dust, or spores.
- 🐾 **Cat Allergens** - Allergens for cats are most often from skin, hair follicles, and saliva. Dander, a naturally occurring combination of those items, is the most common cause of pet allergies. These allergens are produced during a cat's self-cleaning process, when saliva is deposited on the fur.
- 🐾 **Gender Difference** - Male cats usually produce more allergens than females, so if you are looking to get a cat, gender can make an impact on your allergies.
- 🐾 **Total Allergen Level** - Allergies are usually cumulative. Whether or not you have symptoms depends on the total level of allergens in the environment at any one time.

CONTROLLING ALLERGENS

You may be able to solve this problem by learning more about minimizing pet-related allergies and making some minor adjustments to your environment. Controlling allergies takes work, but it's worth it for your pet!

- 🐾 **Wash Your Hands** - Regularly wash your hands after handling any animal. Try to avoid touching your face, especially your eyes and nose, until your hands are clean.
- 🐾 **Brush Regularly** - Regularly brushing your cat daily helps remove loose hair before it has a chance to circulate. End the brushing session by gently wiping your cat with a damp towel to remove any loose hair or dander. If possible, let a non-allergic person do the grooming!
- 🐾 **Better Baths** - Regularly rinse or bathe your cat, once a week if possible, this helps remove saliva buildup that adds to the dander. There are also anti-allergy sprays you can put on your cat designed to reduce dander and shedding.
- 🐾 **Clear the Air** - Make sure your home is equipped with a good HEPA filter. A whole house system on your heat/air conditioning is great, otherwise a standing air purifier in the rooms you use most.
- 🐾 **Close the Windows** - Usually a person isn't allergic to just one thing. Keep unfiltered air out so the total allergen level in the house stays at a minimum.
- 🐾 **Keep it Clean** - Regularly dusting and vacuuming (instead of sweeping) helps keep the dust and allergens to a minimum.

If you continue to have issues, try seeking help from an allergist who can look at specific solutions for you.

Common Household Dangers

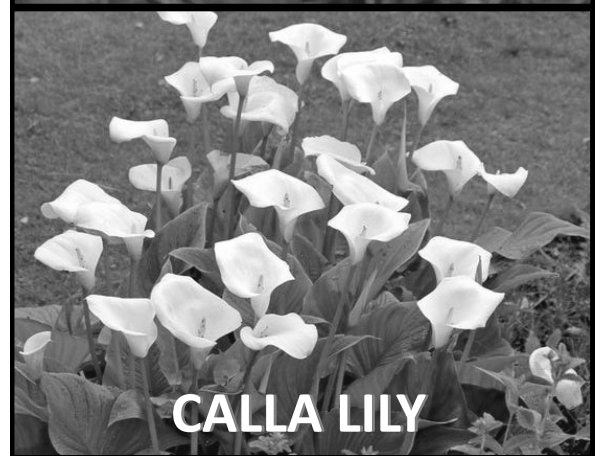
Many common household items can pose a threat to cats and dogs living in our houses. Some of the most common items that you should be extra careful to monitor include:

- 🐾 **Rodent Poisons & Insecticides** - These are the most common sources of animal poisonings.
- 🐾 **Antifreeze** - Ethylene glycol has a sweet taste that attracts animals but is deadly even if consumed in small quantities. Look for antifreeze that contains propylene glycol instead, which is safer for animals if ingested.
- 🐾 **Lawn & Garden Chemicals** - Weed killer, fertilizer, and plant food can all be fatal to your pet. Clean their paws when they come in from the outdoors and be careful about allowing them in the yard unsupervised if you use these products.
- 🐾 **Chocolate** - Even though many pets like the smell, chocolate is poisonous to cats and other companion animals due to its liver toxicity.
- 🐾 **Human Medications** - Medications, such as pain killers (aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Aleve), cold medicine, cancer drugs, anti-depressants, vitamins, and diet pills can all be toxic to animals. Keep medication containers and tubes of ointments away from pets.
- 🐾 **Food Scraps** - Leftovers such as chicken bones can easily shatter and lodge in your cat's throat.
- 🐾 **Small String** - String, yarn, rubber bands, and dental floss are easily swallowed and can cause intestinal blockage or strangulation. Always monitor your cat if they enjoy playing with string.
- 🐾 **Small Objects** - Toys with removable parts or any object small enough to fit inside your cat's mouth can pose a choking hazard. Squeaky toys and stuffed animals with plastic eyes can be dangerous if parts come off while playing.
- 🐾 **Home Appliances** - Cats love playing and hiding in enclosed spaces, which can pose a danger for them if they're unsafe or unnoticed. Open dryers, dishwashers, stoves, or other appliances should all be left closed, and checked before use.
- 🐾 **Household Plants** - Hundreds of common and uncommon household plants can potentially pose a danger to your cat through their leaves, stems, roots, or fruits. The following pages contain a list of the most common plants that may be potentially harmful.

Poisonous Plants

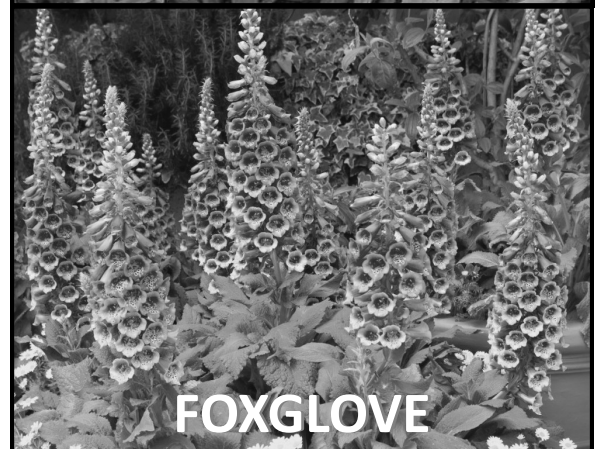
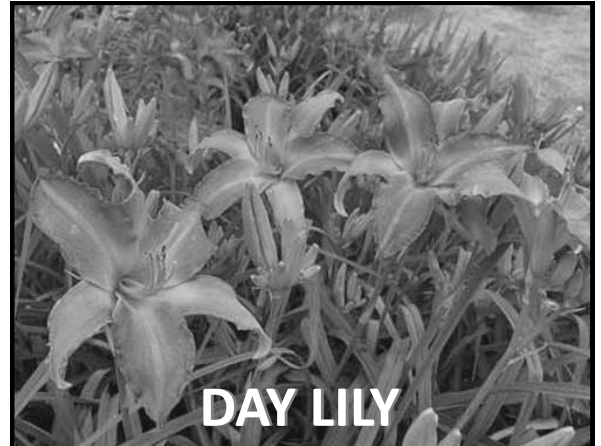
Below are a number of common household plants that are partially or completely toxic to cats. Please remember that even if a portion of the plant is not toxic, other parts of a plant may be hazardous. For a full list of plants poisonous to cats see the ASPCA List at: [ASPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control](https://www.aspcanet.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control)

Name	Other Names/Types
Aloe	
Amaryllis	Many
American Holly	English Holly
American Mandrake	Mayapple
American Yew	Canada Yew
Apple	Includes crabapples
Apricot	Group also includes Plum
Arrow-Head Vine	Nephthytis
Arum	Cuckoo-pint
Arum Lily	Calla Lily
Asian Lily	Asiatic Lily
Asparagus Fern	Asparagus
Autumn Crocus	Meadow Saffron
Azalea	Rosebay
Bay Laurel	Sweet Bag
Bird of Paradise	Peacock Flower
Black Cherry	
Boxwood	
Branching Ivy	English Ivy
Brazilwood	Bird of Paradise
Buckeye	Horse Chestnut
Buckwheat	
Burning Bush	Wahoo
Buttercup	Butter Cress
Butterfly Iris	Spuria Iris
California Ivy	Branching Ivy
Calla Lily	
Caraway	Meridian Fennel
Cardinal Flower	Lobelia
Carnation	Pinks
Castor Bean Plant	Castor Oil Plant
Chamomile	Manzanilla
Cherry	
Chinese Evergreen	
Chives	
Choke Cherry	
Chrysanthemum	Daisy



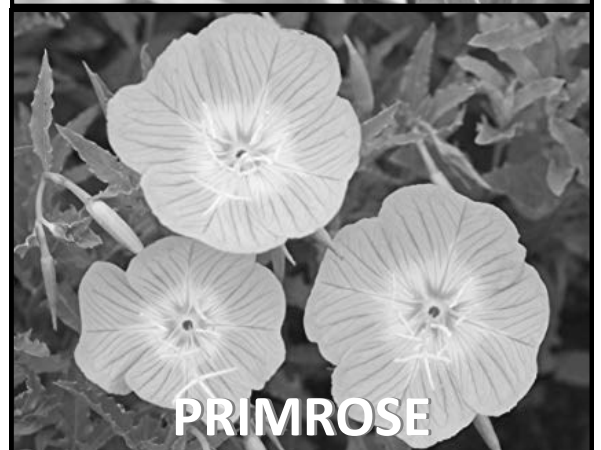
Poisonous Plants

Name	Other Names/Types
Clematis	Virgin's Bower
Cordatum	Fiddle-Leaf
Cutleaf Philodendron	Hurricane Plant
Daffodil	Narcissus
Dahlia	Many varieties
Daisy	Chrysanthemum
Day Lilies	Many varieties
Deadly Nightshade	Nightshade
Desert Azalea	Desert Rose
Desert Rose	Desert Azalea
Dock	Sorrel
English Holly	European Holly
English Ivy	Branching Ivy
English Yew	Western Yew
Epazote	Wormseed
Eucalyptus	Many cultivars
Feather Geranium	Jerusalem Oak
Fern Palm	Sago Palm
Fiddle-Leaf	Horsehead Philodendron
Fig	Weeping Fig
Foxglove	
Garden Chamomile	Chamomile
Garden Hyacinth	Hyacinth
Gardenia	Cape Jasmine
Garlic	Stinking Rose
Geranium	Many cultivars
Gladiola	Many cultivars
Grapefruit	
Hellebore	Christmas Rose
Holly	English Holly
Horse Chestnut	Buckeye
Horseweed	Showy Daisy
Hosta	Plantain Lily
Hyacinth	
Hydrangea	Hortensia
Iris	Flag
Larkspur	
Laurel	Mountain laurel
Lavender	Common Lavender
Leek	Elephant Garlic
Lemon	
Lemon Grass	Oil Grass
Lemon Verbena	Lemon Beebrush
Lily	



Poisonous Plants

Name	Other Names/Types
Lime	
Lobelia	Cardinal Flower
Locust	
Marijuana	Indian Hemp
Marjoram	Knotted Marjoram
Milkweed	Swamp Milkweed
Mint	Garden Mint
Mistletoe "American"	American Mistletoe
Morning Glory	
Mum	Chrysanthemum
Nightshade	Deadly Nightshade
Oleander	Rose-Bay
Onion	
Orange	
Oregano	Greek Oregano
Parsley	Italian Parsley
Peach	Similar plants: Plum
Peony	
Periwinkle	Running Myrtle. Vinca
Plantain Lily	Hosta
Plum	similar plants: apricot
Poinciana	Peacock Flower
Poinsettia	
Primrose	
Rhododendron	Rosebay
Rhubarb	Pie Plant
Sago Palm	Coontie Palm
Sorrel	Common Sorrel
Spring Parsley	
St. John's Wort	Klamath Weed
Sweet Pea	Perennial Pea
Taro	Caladium
Tarragon	French Tarragon
Tiger Lily	
Trumpet Lily	Calla Lily
Tulip	
Water Hemlock	Cowbane
Winterberry	English Holly
Wisteria	
Wood Lily	
Yarrow	Milfoil
Yellow Oleander	
Yew	Japanese yew
Yucca	



Finding a Lost Cat

Losing a pet can be a scary experience. While lost animals do often return home, cats are almost 20% less likely to be found than dogs. If your beloved cat strays from home, here are some tips that can be helpful to help reunite you with your companion:

- 🐾 **Keep Watch** - If your cat is prone to running or “door dashing” keep an eye out whenever you open a door, or try to limit access by closing off doors to the room you’re in before going outside.
- 🐾 **Wear a Collar** - Even if you have an indoor-only cat, having a collar means your cat is more likely to be found. Regularly wearing a collar means your cat will likely have a collar if it ever escapes.
- 🐾 **Contact Animal Shelters** - Most animal shelters and animal control centers (including ours!) keep logs of all missing animals. File a lost pet report to every shelter within a 60-mile radius right away and provide an accurate description of your cat’s look, color, and collar.
- 🐾 **Search the Neighborhood** - Most animals are found within 1 mile of their home. If your cat gets out, notify neighbors, letter carriers, delivery people, and anyone else who might see your pet.
- 🐾 **Keep a Photo** - They’re not just for Instagram! Having a recent photo on hand helps identify your cat right away.
- 🐾 **Advertise** - More eyes are your friend. Post notices at local businesses, community centers, intersections, vet offices, and other places where people may find or notice your poster or cat.
- 🐾 **Recovery Scams** - Be wary of pet recovery scams. If a stranger claims to have found your pet, ask them to describe the animal thoroughly with information that wouldn’t be included in your poster. Be especially wary of people who claim to have 100% pet recovery rates or ask for money before returning your pet.
- 🐾 **Don’t Give Up** - In many cases animals who have been gone for weeks or even months still turn up either at your door or at another location. Keep an eye out and don’t give up hope.
- 🐾 **Go Online** - There are a number of lost pet resources for each state and through social media. Make postings here and keep updated information going out especially if you get sightings.
- 🐾 **Get Chipped** - All cats who come from the Humane Society of Jefferson County already have a microchip to help identify them. If you move or change contact information, make sure to update your pet’s information with the microchip company so you can be contacted if your pet is found.

A pet, even an indoor pet, has a better chance of being returned with a collar and ID tag that has your name, address, and telephone number. If you like the color orange, there is also a national movement to have cats wear orange collars to identify them as lost indoor cats to increase their return rate!

Choosing a Boarding Kennel

If you need to go out of town, a boarding kennel can give your pet quality care and give you peace of mind. Before loading your cat into the car, it's important to find the right kennel and prepare your pet:

- 🐾 **Ask Around** - Ask a friend, neighbor, or veterinarian for a recommendation. Once you have a few names, do a little more digging online to check on reviews and ratings.
- 🐾 **Give Them a Call** - Make sure they have enough time to answer the phone and discuss their practices and setup. It gives you good information about their facility and about the time they have and take to be mindful about their care.
- 🐾 **Ask Questions** - Check on important items that define the care given to your cat, such as:
 - What staff training do they have to identify health problems?
 - What are the requirements for vaccinations?
 - How much space and what is the setup for each individual animal?
 - What is in the resting area and what is provided in the kennel?
 - Are cats housed away from dogs?
 - How often are animals fed?
 - How are rates calculated?
 - Can owners bring special food or treats?
 - What veterinarian do they use?

PREPARE YOUR PET

In addition to identifying the best place to take your animal, there are also a few things you can do to help prepare your pet to be boarded and prepare the boarding facility for your pet.

- 🐾 **Basic Training** - Be sure your pet knows basic commands and is socialized around other people and pets. If your pet has aggression or fear issues, it probably is not a good idea to board.
- 🐾 **Training Trips** - If you're going on a long trip, it is a good idea to try boarding your pet for a day or two beforehand to help acclimate your pet and make sure the boarding kennel is the right place.
- 🐾 **Share Information** - When you arrive at the boarding facility, make sure to tell or write down important information about your cat such as any medical or behavioral concerns.
- 🐾 **Short Goodbyes** - Pets read body language and our emotional goodbyes can be traumatic for them. Drop off your pet and avoid long, emotional partings.

Stay Connected to the Humane Society of Jefferson County

Thank you so much for choosing to adopt through the Humane Society of Jefferson County. Becoming a forever home for our cats means you're saving lives and getting a new best friend all at once!

- 🐾 **We Are Your Resource** - If you have any questions about your new cat, or concerns about health, behavior, or anything related to animals, please give us a call at **920-674-2048**.
- 🐾 **Don't Forget Your Evaluation** - In your take home packet is a quick, 1-sheet evaluation on your adoption process. This feedback helps keep us up to date on our process and any helpful changes.
- 🐾 **Stay Connected** - Our humane society offers a wide range of events and classes, many of them free, that offer advice and other ideas on pet care. You can always check our website and social media to stay informed of what's happening.
- 🐾 **Send Pictures!** - We love to see photos and hear stories about how well the cats that we cared for are doing in their new, forever homes. Please feel free to send updates and photos for us to post.

HELPING US PROVIDE CARE

As a non-profit organization, the Humane Society of Jefferson County relies on the generosity of our donors, supporters, and adopters to make sure we continue to be a savior to the beautiful pets like yours and all the loveable animals who come through our doors. Your annual membership, volunteering, or other support makes a **HUGE** difference in continuing the important work we do.

- 🐾 **If you have questions about making a tax-deductible donation or volunteering with the HSJC, please visit www.HSJC-wis.com or call 920-674-2048.**



We hope everything goes perfectly for the rest of your lives, but we understand that sometimes there are uncontrollable circumstances. Remember, if you ever need to surrender your pet, the Humane Society of Jefferson County should always be your first call.