

Welcome Home Packet

Cat Adoption



Dear Adopter,

Thank you for choosing adoption and becoming a lifesaver! Your decision to adopt a pet from Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS) has saved a life and has opened up a kennel for another pet in need.

At MCAS, we hope to set you up for success with your new family member. Your Adoption Counselor will send you home with information about your pet's health and history. Please review the information in this packet for more helpful tips about caring for your new pet.

If you have any questions about your new pet or the adoption process, please email us at mail.pet@multco.us.

– The MCAS Adoption Team



 **Multnomah
County
Animal Services**



NEW CAT CHECKLIST

MCAS has a brief recommend list of "must-haves" for your new cat

BASICS

- ✓ AGE AND SPECIES APPROPRIATE FOOD
- ✓ LITTER BOXES (ONE PER CAT +1 MORE)
- ✓ GROOMING TOOLS / BRUSHES
- ✓ CAT SAFE COLLAR OR HARNESS/LEASHES
- ✓ PERSONAL ID TAGS
- ✓ CRATE, CARRIER AND/OR BABY GATE
- ✓ WATER AND FOOD BOWLS
- ✓ LITTER SCOOPER / SUPPLIES
- ✓ BEDDING, BLANKETS, TOWELS
- ✓ PET STAIN AND ODOR/ENZYME REMOVER

FUN & GAMES

- ✓ CAT SCRATCHERS OF ALL SIZES / STYLES
- ✓ TOYS TO RELIEVE BOREDOM
- ✓ TRAINING TREATS TO LEARN NEW THINGS
- ✓ PUZZLE TOYS
- ✓ CAT PERCHES / CAT TREES
- ✓ LONG LASTING CHEW TREATS

PET OWNER CHECKLIST

After you take your pet home, you'll need to keep up with your pet's microchip and licensing information, vaccinations, and preventatives on a regular basis!

MICROCHIP

A microchip is a small, electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder that is about the same size as a grain of rice. The microchips presently used in pets only contain identification numbers. No, the microchip is not a GPS device and cannot track your animal if it gets lost. This is why it's important to make sure your information is up to date anytime it changes.

At the time of your adoption, MCAS registers your pet's microchip with 24Petwatch. However, there are a few additional steps you need to take to make sure the microchip will be useful in helping your lost pet find their way home.

- ✓ **Call 24PetWatch at 1-866-597-2424 and select option 1 (Available 24/7)**
Here you will be able to verify the pet information and your contact information. you can also authorize to release to someone who may find your lost pet. Without this authorization, your information can only be released to an animal shelter/clinic).
- ✓ **Scan yearly: Microchips can move!**
It's rare but possible for microchips to move. At your yearly vet visit, ask your vet to confirm that the chip is still easily found.
- ✓ **If your pet goes missing, be proactive!**
Call 24PetWatch immediately to report your pet as missing. Check with local shelters and check/post on social media pages such as Facebook and Nextdoor.
- ✓ **Update contact information immediately if it changes.**
Call 24PetWatch at 1-866-597-2424 to have any contact information updated.

PET OWNER CHECKLIST... CONTINUED

LICENSING

The state of Oregon requires you to maintain a current license with your residing county for dogs and cats. If you reside in Multnomah County, MCAS will assist with a license at the time of adoption, but it will be your responsibility to ensure your license remains current and up to date.

✔ Visit <https://www.multcopets.org/licensing-information>

Here you will be able to renew an existing or purchase a new license. You can also view participating vet clinics that are authorized license vendors, and can assist you in this process.

VACCINATIONS

MCAS vaccinates every pet that comes to our shelter. However, some pets will need additional vaccines to stay healthy.

Kittens need frequent vaccinations:

- ✔ 1st Round Kitten (6-9 weeks old): FVRCP and Dewormer
- ✔ 2nd Round Kitten (9-11 weeks old): FVRCP Booster, and Dewormer
- ✔ 3rd Round Kitten (3 months old): Rabies, FVRCP Booster, and Dewormer

All adult cats should receive the following ANNUALLY:

- ✔ Rabies Booster
- ✔ FVRCP Booster
- ✔ Dewormer



PREVENTATIVES

It is important to speak to your veterinarian about including the following preventatives in your pet's routine!

✔ Flea/Tick Preventative

Fleas and ticks can be a problem for pets all year round, especially if your pet frequently goes outside. Speak with your veterinarian about the best products to prevent fleas and ticks on your pet.

If you ever have any questions concerning your pet's health, please speak with your veterinarian.

THE 3 DAYS, 3 WEEKS, 3 MONTHS RULE OF TAKING HOME A CAT

The 3-3-3 rule is a general guideline. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Give your pet space to go at their own pace.

3D

IN THE FIRST 3 DAYS



I MIGHT BE...

Feeling scared/unsure

Avoids interactions

May use litterbox inappropriately

Not comfortable enough to show their personality

May not want to eat or drink

Shut down and may frequently hide under furniture or in other dark, quiet places in the home

Testing boundaries

3W

AFTER 3 WEEKS



I MIGHT BE...

Feeling comfortable in the home

Starting to settle in

Realizing this could possibly be their home

Figuring out their environment

Getting into a routine

Letting their guard down and may start showing their true personality

Behavior challenges may show up and require additional training

3M

AFTER 3 MONTHS



I MIGHT BE...

Feeling comfortable in the home

Building trust and a true bond

Gained a complete sense of security with their new family

Set in a routine



*If the pet you've adopted is not the right fit, we do take returns **within 30 days** and can assist with rehoming.*

Please visit Multcopets.org for more information.



CATS need...



1. SAFE SPACES in Every Room



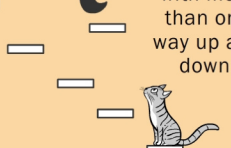
HIDING SPACES

Hiding is a normal response to being scared or overwhelmed. Don't disturb.



HIGH UP SPACES

with more than one way up and down.



WARM SPACES

sunny spots, heater/blankets



CONVENIENT LITTER BOX

scooped clean, in a quiet location with low foot traffic



2. MULTIPLE. Separate Resources



- **FOOD:** Feed cats in separate locations. (Cats are solitary hunters!)
- **WATER:** Some cats like their food & water in separate areas.
- **LITTER BOXES:** One box per cat plus one extra, in separate & accessible locations, not easily blocked by another cat.

UH OH...



3. PLAY & Predatory Behaviors



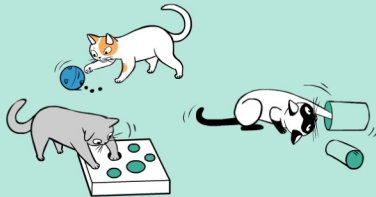
INTERACTIVE PLAY

Cats NEED predatory experiences! Simulate the hunting experience by making toys move like prey. Rotate toys to keep things interesting.



FOOD PUZZLES

Puzzle feeders for foraging and tiny frequent meals.



4. POSITIVE & CONSISTENT Social Interactions



CONSENT + CHOICE

Respect what your cat likes and doesn't like as an individual. * Learn cat body language!



NO FORGE, NO PUNISHMENT



SOCIALIZE

... kittens to positive handling (between 2-7 weeks)



5. FAMILIAR SCENTS for Trust & Security



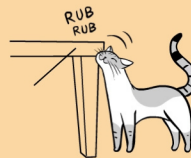
FAMILIAR BEDDING

USE SCENTS TO INTRODUCE NEW ANIMALS SAFELY

Would you like to SMELL your NEW housemate?



SCRATCHING POSTS



FACIAL MARKING on things

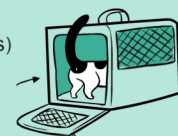
DO NOT:

- use scented litter
- use scented cleaners
- clean away all familiar scents



6. REWARD BASED TRAINING for Good Welfare

Use what your cat likes (eg, their favorite treats) to teach new skills & provide positive experiences.



CARRIER TRAINING for travel, vet visits, & emergencies



HEALTH EXAMS



DENTAL CARE



TAKING MEDS



TAKING WEIGHT



NAIL TRIMS



BRUSHING/ GROOMING



CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



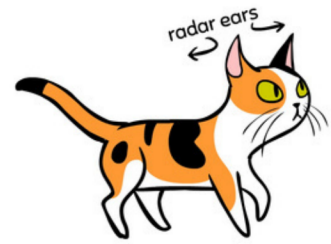
TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED

Interactive CAT Play

by Dr. Mikel Delgado



Toys that are left lying on the floor are “dead”. They are boring. Fun toys are like **prey!** They are usually small and quiet, and **they move!**

Playing is an **interactive** experience: a simulated hunting experience that gives cats physical exercise and stimulates their brains. We tailor our play to our individual cat’s needs. Are they a generalist or a specialist?

Playing is also a way to **bond with our cat**. Not all cats like to be cuddled.

Make play a daily habit or activity, eg, before their dinner or bedtime, and whenever they have the zoomies! Just as dogs need to go out for walks and to sniff, cats need **enrichment** and shouldn’t be sleeping all day.

Prey Types

for the SPECIALIST HUNTER*

feathers eg, Da Bird



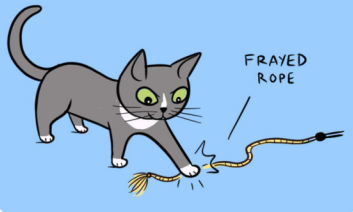
mouse-like eg, Cat Catcher



bug-like eg, Cat Dancer



snake-like eg, Bamboozler



food puzzles

Introduce as a choice and never force. Many cats enjoy these. foodpuzzlesforcats.com



laser toys

...can be frustrating because cats can’t catch them. Best use for short periods as a warm-up, then switch to a real toy.

NOVELTY: Rotate the toys to keep things interesting!

*For safety reasons, interactive toys with string/wire should be stored securely after play.



Play Tips

- **ALTERNATE SPEED OF MOVEMENT.** Try slow movements. Barely moving.

- **MOVE AWAY** from your cat or along a L-R plane.



- **MOVE UNDER SOMETHING.**



- Sounds of **RUSTLING** or **CRUNCHINESS** are exciting!

- **LET THEM WAIT.**

Don’t make it too easy or it will be boring.



- **NOT TOO CLOSE.**

Cats can see the toy best when it is a few feet away.

- Give the **FULL HUNTING EXPERIENCE** - paws, mouth, and whiskers!



- Most importantly, **HAVE FUN** playing with your little hunter!

Have you played with your cat TODAY?



Common Feline Illnesses

We often compare animal shelters to child daycare centers because of their ability to harbor contagious illness. To keep pets safe, MCAS follows disease mitigation practices, but it is still possible that your new pet may have been exposed to an illness either before arriving at MCAS or during their time here. Many illnesses take several weeks after exposure to become symptomatic, so we ask that you keep an eye out for symptoms of common canine illnesses, which are listed below.

Feline Upper Respiratory Infections (URI)

An upper respiratory infection (URI) is a highly transmissible illness that is common with cats. Cats that have recently been exposed to illness or experienced stress are most at risk. The most common signs are nose and eye discharge, decreased hunger, sneezing, or a fever.

Treatment may include medication, isolation, and rest. Young cats and cats without a vaccine history are the most vulnerable to complications from a URI

For most cats with a URI, the prognosis is very good, but can be life-threatening in kittens, older cats, nursing mothers, or a cat whose immune system is already compromised.

Feline Panleukopenia

Feline parvovirus (FPV) causes a potentially deadly disease known as feline distemper or panleukopenia. FPV is highly contagious in young cats. FPV most commonly occurs in cats between 3 to 6 months of age.

Common signs of illness include fever, depression, lack of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. Treatment may include medication, isolation, and rest. Kittens that survive for longer than 5 days usually recover, but recovery may take a few weeks. Older kittens may have a milder form of the disease and a better prognosis.

Ringworm

Ringworm (feline dermatophytosis) is one of the most common skin disorders among cats. The most common symptom of ringworm is a circular itchy rash on the infected cat.

While ringworm can spread to other animals and to humans, it is easily treated through antifungal medications. If there are multiple lesions present, a full-body rinse may be used. It can take up to six weeks of repeated treatments to completely cure a ringworm infection.



If you see signs of these illnesses in your newly adopted pet within 14 days, you can contact MCAS for possible treatment options. However, in the case of a critical emergency, please see a veterinarian immediately.

THE BASICS

KNOWING THE LITTERBOX

Most cats will naturally drift towards using a litter box from an early age. However, improper urination or defecation outside of the litter box can occur for many reasons. This may lead to stress between you and your new cat. Here are some important basics to know about the litter box, and tips for addressing urination or defecation.

Placement Makes Perfect!

When you are placing the litter box, it should be in a low traffic area of the home. Avoid placing it next to your cat's food or water dish, and/or loud or suddenly startling noises (such as the washing machine or dishwasher). If you have adopted a young kitten, we recommend starting them off in a small room with their box until you see them consistently using it.

One Per Cat, Plus One

Have you ever had to share your bathroom with a less than ideal roommate? Your cat may enjoy the company of their fellow friends, but sharing their box is a different matter. To keep the peace, we recommend having one litter box per cat, plus one more. This means that in a house with two cats, we recommend at least 3 litter boxes in various locations of the house.

Keep the Box Clean

No one likes a filthy toilet, and your cat will agree. Solid waste and clump should be scooped daily, and a complete wash of the box should happen at least once a month.

The Cat Chooses the Litter

We suggest using a sandy textured litter that is plain and scent-free, but the choice is basically up to your cat. If your cat is struggling with litter box issues, there could be several factors at play.

Rule out illness. If your cat is not using the litter box, the first step is to have your pet seen by a veterinarian. They can help rule out medical issues or an underlying cause. The top four reasons for inappropriate use are medical, territorial marking, dislike for the litter box, or a traumatic event.

Clean up all messes. Any area that has been soiled should be cleaned with a cleaner that has an enzyme remover. Even if you can't smell the previous mess, your cat can!

Add another litter box. Each cat in your home should have their own litter box.

If your pet is not using the litter box correctly, contact your vet to rule out possible medical causes.

THE BASICS... CONTINUED

CAT TO CAT INTRODUCTIONS

Cats need time to adjust to changes in their environment. Like us, they have their own personalities. When introducing two cats, consider things such as their energy level, history with other cats, and their behavior when they see another cat. This won't predict your cat's reaction to a new cat, but it can give insight into how they may react when they see another animal in their home.

STEP ONE: Separation Now = Success later!

The first impression between two cats can set the mood for the entire relationship. We are not entirely different from cats in this regard. If the first time you meet someone, they say something unpleasant to you, it can take some time to shake off the first interaction. When bringing a new cat home, it is best to separate them from your resident cat. This will help control the initial introduction.

While separated, the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other, but not see or touch each other. This can be done by placing your new cat in a spare bedroom, laundry room, walk in closet, or bathroom. To prevent them from reaching under the door, you can add an additional barrier like a baby gate or rolled towel. During separation, each cat should be provided with their own items (food and water, litter box, scratching post, bed, and toys) to alleviate any stress. Play with and feed the cats near the door that separates them, so they can learn that being near each other is a good thing. After a few days, we recommend allowing the cats to rotate between the two rooms. This allows your new cat to explore, but also lets your two cats separately investigate the other's smell. Play around with removing the barrier that has been preventing touch at this point and notice if either cat's reactions to each other under the door is positive.

STEP TWO: The Viewing

Once there is no aggression (swatting, growling, etc.) observed between the two cats under the door, you can begin to introduce the cats to the sight of each other. A tall baby gate can be helpful here, or you can even rotate time in an extra-large wire crate if you have an agile cat.

STEP THREE: Meeting and Friendship

After viewing each other without any direct swatting, you can open the door to allow for the cats to interact with each other. Do not force the cats to interact, allow them to approach each other on their own terms. During this time, it is normal for cats to hiss or growl at each other.

However, they should not charge at or bite each other. If this happens and the cats begin to fight, do not attempt to pick them up or grab them. Try to separate them by using your voice or something that you can put in between them. You can also prepare yourself with a spray bottle filled with water. Once separated in their own rooms, go back to Step One or Step Two to work on a slower introduction.

THE BASICS... CONTINUED

CAT TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

Whether you're adopting a new dog or cat, the first introduction between your pets critical to long term success. Here are three steps that can help you ensure a successful meeting.

Let Them Settle

Give your new pet time to decompress. The shelter and car ride can be stressful, so set up a room in the home where your new companion can get adjusted away from resident pets. First impressions are important, so take your time to introduce your pets.

Separation Now = Success Later!

Over a few days, rotate which pet has the freedom and which is confined, to allow each pet plenty of time to learn the other's scent. When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be separated. Once both animals are regularly eating, sleeping, and using the litter box, you can proceed to the next step.

Make the (Leashed) Introductions

Allow both pets to be in the same room at the same time but keep the dog on a leash or in a kennel. When your dog is calm or friendly, reward them with a treat. Continue with this introduction until the dog and cat are calm and appear relaxed around each other. If either pet becomes aggressive, stop and return to the previous step. Make sure your cat always has an escape path. The pets should not be left unsupervised together. This step may take days, weeks, or even months.

Once the two pets are consistently relaxed in each other's presence, you can begin to allow them more freedom to move around the house.

***Never leave two pets that have just met unattended.
Consult a professional if you feel uneasy at any point in the introduction process.***

Is Declawing an Option?



Cats have a normal need to scratch, stretch, and climb on surfaces. These behaviors help remove excess claw material and keep a cat's nails clean. While these behaviors may be destructive to furniture or household items, cats are unaware that this behavior may not be appropriate for the owner's belongings. While the behavior is normal for cats, the damage could result in increased stress on the people in the home. To reduce this, you might consider the option of "declawing." Before you make this decision, we'd like to offer you information about this procedure and provide alternative options for you and your cat.

When we hear the term "declaw," it's not uncommon to imagine a more advanced type of manicure - an easy way to keep a cat's nails permanently trimmed at a more desirable length. However, the procedure to declaw a cat is far more severe and can cause negative long-lasting effects, both behaviorally and physically. Cats' nails are part of the last bone in their toes, and the declawing procedure involves an amputation (using a scalpel blade or laser) to fully remove the claw.

Since a cat has nails on all ten of its front toes, this also means that the cat will undergo ten amputations to ensure the nails are fully removed. In comparison to a human, it is similar to cutting off fingers at their last knuckle.

Recovery from declawing can be extremely painful. It requires cats to walk on the newly amputated toes. The of pain experienced after surgery can cause cats to avoid other "normal" activities long-term such as using the litterbox. Declawing a cat to protect the furniture or address playful scratching is discouraged. As an elective procedure, there is no benefit to the pet. Instead, we suggest addressing the concerns by providing appropriate areas for cats to use their claws, while deterring them from areas that they are drawn to scratching.

ALTERNATIVES TO DECLAWING CATS

There are alternatives to declawing cats. The effectiveness of each option may vary depending on a cat's age and temperament.

Behavioral Training and Redirection

If you catch your cat in the act of scratching something they shouldn't, you can interrupt them and redirect them to a more appropriate area. You can interrupt them by clapping your hands loudly, slapping a wall, or using a spray bottle filled with water. Never yell at or hit your cat as punishment. They may start to avoid you altogether or display other unwanted behaviors. In addition, you can find ways to make the area become less desirable by limiting their access. You can also cover the area in double-sided sticky tape to deter unfavorable scratching.

Frequent Nail Trimming

Trimming a cat's claws every few weeks is an important part of maintaining your pet's health. This is also a fast and effective alternative to declawing. If you're unsure of the steps to begin to trim your cat's nails, please discuss this with your vet. There are also many videos and guides on the internet that can assist you with this.

...Declawing Continued

Soft Claws

These are plastic nail caps for cat claws that are applied with surgical glue. Cats usually adjust to nail caps in a few days. This requires a patient and dedicated owner, but it is a reasonable alternative to declawing. Your local vet office or groomer may also be able to assist with applying soft claws at a reasonable cost.

Toys/Scratching Post

Present alternatives for your cat to scratch and climb. Does your cat tend to scratch a specific item in the house? This could be due to texture or accessibility. Looking for toys or scratching posts that mimic their preferred (but inappropriate) scratching source has the highest chance of becoming more enticing to your cat.

Calming Sprays/Diffusers

There are studies that show a calming spray or diffuser can reduce anxiety in household cats. This, in turn, can reduce unwanted behaviors.

Appropriate Environmental Enrichment

Cats are natural hunters and explorers. When we make them indoor pets, they can experience stress. To help reduce stress, it is important to provide them with an enriched environment. An enriched environment includes providing things like scratching surfaces, toys, cat trees, and more.