

# Cat/Kitten Adoption Packet

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# **INTRODUCING A CAT TO A NEW HOME**

Cats are creatures of habit, who by nature, don't like change. Most times when introducing a cat into a new home, it is extremely stressful for them. Cat's reaction to stress and fear is to run and hide, which 9 times out of 10, they will do when you bring them home for the first time. You can help your cat get acclimated to their new home by providing a safe haven for him in a confined and cozy space.

Before bringing home a new kitty, set up a small, quiet room such as a bathroom, laundry room, or spare bedroom with cat supplies like a litter box (as far away from the food as possible), a bed, toys, scratching posts, food and water. Open up the carrier and let the cat decide whether he wants to explore. Many times, a cat will choose to remain inside the carrier for quite a while.

Give the cat time to adjust to his new territory. Come back to the room to visit often, but let the cat set the pace of the visits and watch their body language to indicate whether they're not in the mood for attention. When he's ready for love, he'll seek it out! When the cat is comfortable in this room (it may take a day, a week, or more) open the door and let him explore the rest of the house at his own pace. Cats usually begin investigating at night.

Cats don't always adjust to a new environment overnight, and it sometimes can take weeks for them to get used to your home and your family. The length of time needed to establish new territory will depend on the cat's temperament, past experiences and whether there are other animals already present in the new home.

When your cat settles in to the home and their new routine, make sure you provide them with plenty of toys and a variety of surfaces and hiding places, like a cat tree or a cat condo.

## **Multi-Cat Household**

When a new cat is being introduced into a home where there is already a resident cat (or cats), it is especially important to give the new cat a safe haven. The new cat will need his own room to adjust to the home before introducing him to the resident cat. This allows both the newcomer and the resident cat time to get used to one another's scents before their first face to face interaction as well as safeguard against passing any shelter-related illnesses to your resident cat. We recommend waiting seven to 10 days to make sure that your new kitty has a chance to settle in, get checked out by a vet and bond with you before proceeding with the introduction.

The best way to let cats meet for the first time is to crack the separating door a few inches and let them sniff each other through this space. Observe the cats while doing this for about a half hour. If one or both of the cats give a very intense hiss, growl, or swat at each other, close the door and repeat this process until the visits become calm. A little hissing and batting at each other is to be expected. In the meantime, you can help the cats become used to each other by playing with interactive toys while the door is cracked, feeding the cats treats on either side of the door, and switching the cats' bedding so they can get used to each other's scent.

If the sniff visits are going well, it's time to start supervised interactions. Open the door and let the new cat come out and explore. Let the cat come out of the room at his own pace. Forcing the cat to come into a new territory will just make the cat increasingly tense and prolong

his insecurity. Let the cats enter each other's territory for about a half hour. Then separate the cats and repeat this process a few times each day. If a cat seems overly stressed about the other cat, you can distract the cat with toys or food treats, then immediately separate the cats at the end of the play or treat session. This time apart allows them to be able to process the information they gained while they were together and allows them to regain their sense of territory and confidence. Continue this process daily, lengthening the amount of time they are together a little each session.

Create positive associations. Here's the secret to doing a successful introduction: give the cats a reason to like each other! Let them see each other for very brief periods while being offered something irresistible, such as a treat or a meal. Keep them far enough apart so each kitty feels comfortable. As soon as they've eaten, separate them again and do another session later.

Never punish a cat for aggressive behavior towards another cat. Most owners do this thinking they will teach the cat that the aggressive behavior is inappropriate, but only end up making the cat more stressed and upset, prolonging the cat-to-cat aggression. The best way to react is either to stay silent, and calmly separate the cats, or to speak softly to the cats.

The key to introducing cats to each other is patience. What we most often perceive as fighting is actually their way of working out their territory. This is an essential part of how cats learn to live together in a multi-cat household and they must go through it. Our intervention prolongs this process. For the most part, let them do what they will and stay out of it.

The only times your intervention may be necessary is if their exchanges with each other draw blood or if one is continually chasing/dominating the other one. The best way to intervene is to squirt them with a spray bottle containing water. Ideally you should just squirt the one who is instigating the aggression (and again only if the cat is drawing blood or is constantly chasing the other cat, not for hissing or batting at the other cat). If a spray bottle isn't handy, a loud noise, such as clapping hands, also works well. You never want to get in the middle of a cat fight. Cats in the heat of battle can redirect their aggression toward you and cat bites to humans can be serious.

## **Household with Resident Dog**

When introducing your dog to a new cat it is important that you have your dog under control and that it knows some basic manners. It is generally easier to introduce a kitten to a dog, but it isn't necessary for a harmonious relationship. If you do bring home a kitten, follow the guidelines given below, but do not leave them together unsupervised until the kitten is at least four months old and able to defend himself if the need arises.

Introducing a new cat to a resident dog is similar to introducing cats to one another. Without letting them actually meet, you will want to start by giving the new cat a safe haven. Set him up in his own room and allow him to become comfortable. Once he is comfortable in the room, let him explore the rest of the house for short periods each day while the dog is not there. When the cat appears fairly relaxed in most areas of the house, let them meet. The best way to do this is to introduce them while the cat is up on a high surface unreachable by the dog (such as a counter or cat furniture), then bring the dog into the room on leash. Observe their interactions. *A dog that is showing overt aggression such as lunging, snarling, growling, baring teeth, etc., will probably never accept a cat. The cat is better off being returned.*

If all is reasonably calm so far, walk the dog around the room on leash. Let the dog go wherever he wants, but don't let go of the leash in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On-leash interactions give the cat the opportunity to approach the dog if he chooses, or to find his own routes of escape. During the first few meetings the cat and dog will probably not interact face to face. Do not ever let the dog intimidate the cat by barking or chasing. If the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, that is a good sign and the dog usually learns not to encroach on the cat's territory again. When they set up boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a working relationship. Let the cat interact with the dog on leash for about half an hour, then return the cat back to his safe haven. Increase the amount of time they are together a little bit each visit.

It is important to be patient and encouraging during their interactions. If you are relaxed, they will be more at ease. Always praise friendly behavior profusely. Don't try to rush the introduction or force them to interact more than either of them are willing. Pressing them to accept each other will only slow down the adjustment process. You should use your best judgment as to when they can begin supervised sessions with the dog off-leash.

## Why You Should Keep Cats Indoors

Your cat may tell you the great outdoors is lots of fun - grass to roll in, trees to climb. However, cats, like children, depend on us to recognize danger and protect them from harm. In addition to grass and fresh air, the outdoors poses many risks to your pets. Lethal risks that can be completely avoided:

**TRAFFIC:** To listen to some people, a pet's "getting hit by a car" is just part of pet ownership. Your pet is not likely to agree....

**POISON:** Cat's don't usually resist the temptation of checking out neighbors' yards, the hoods of their cars, and their flower beds. Although it is illegal and inhumane, some people put out a poisonous substance to get rid of those paw prints on a car. Poison also may be put out for other animals, and pets are accidentally poisoned, such as by eating poisoned mice. A number of yard care products can also be poisonous, such as snail bait and some lawn sprays.

**CRUELTY:** Unfortunate, but true, there are more than enough people in this world who are intentionally cruel to animals.

**INJURIES:** If your pet goes outside, it risks injurious or deadly fights with other animals, as well as exposure to those animals' diseases. Bite wounds often abscess, resulting in a serious injury for your pet, and a veterinary bill for you.

**DISEASE:** Even if your pet is vaccinated, it runs the risk of serious diseases:

**FeLV (Feline Leukemia)** The vaccine for feline leukemia, although valuable, provides about 80% - 85% protection, leaving your pet still at some risk of contracting leukemia, a deadly disease transmitted basically by saliva, from another cat.

**FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus)** is a disease that compromises the immune system of the cat. There is no vaccine for FIV, and there is no cure. FIV is generally transmitted between cats by biting. A blood test determines if the cat is FIV positive. Scientific evidence indicates FIV is not communicable to humans. A number of stray cats are FIV positive, and your cat runs a significant risk of FIV contact with these outdoor cats. For more information regarding FIV, contact your veterinarian.

## Kitten Proofing

Kittens can – and do – get into everything. In order to keep them safe, it's important to *kitten proof* your home. These are some tips on how to keep your kitten safe in your home and how to keep your home safe from your kitten.

- Look around your house first, at high shelves and low cupboards and hidden nooks. Do you see things that kitty might break, or harmful substances she might ingest?
- If you're into needlework, keep your supplies in a closed container. Needles and thread might appear to be fine play things, but can be fatal if your kitten swallows them.
- Fold and secure your window blinds cord with a rubber band, out of kitty's reach. If she gets tangled up in it, she could strangle.
- If you don't want to find your floors littered with garbage, invest in covered wastebaskets and kitchen garbage containers.
- Always keep the door to your clothes dryer closed, and double-check inside before using it. Cats like to find dark, warm places to sleep, and the results could be tragic.
- Keep the floor clean of stray rubber bands, ribbon and twine. All are hazardous when ingested by a kitten.
- Keep cupboard doors and dresser drawers securely closed. Cats can find all kinds of mischief inside, and can be injured if you close a drawer and the kitten is behind it.
- Cloth drapes are better left out of reach of your furry "curtain-climber". Tie them up securely until your kitten is trained to a scratching post.



- Keep your toilet lid down at all times. Better yet, keep your bathroom off limits to your kitten unless you absolutely have to keep her litter box there.
- Do not keep your kitten in the garage, and always keep the doors closed. Anti-freeze is very tasty to animals, and is just one of the common poisonous substances found in garages.
- There are a number of household plants poisonous to cats.
- Remove all breakable valuables from high shelves and store them in a cabinet with a door.
- Cover electric cords, such as the tangle from your computer, with covers sold for that purpose. Caution: wrapping electric cords could be a fire hazard.

## Litter Box Training

**How many?** You should always have one more litter box than you have cats. That is, one cat gets two litter boxes. Two cats get three. If you have a two-story home keep at least one litter box on each floor.

**How big?** The litter box should be roomy enough for your cat to turn around in. Forget about trying to get a small litter box to minimize the unsightliness. You have a cat; your friends will have to understand. If the box is too small, your cat simply won't use it and will eliminate elsewhere. But if the litter box is too big, you may also have a problem, especially if you have a very small kitten.

Don't buy a huge box and expect your kitten to scale it every time she has to "go to the bathroom." Buy a smallish litter box for your kitten and invest in a larger one as she grows.

**To cover or not to cover?** That is the question. There are covered litter boxes as well as open ones. If you use a covered box, make sure your cat can get in and out easily. The best types of covered box also have overlapping seams so that sprayed urine will not leak out. Remember, though, that some cats hate being enclosed when they are at their most vulnerable.

**Location, location, location.** A cardinal rule of cat ownership is to never put your cat's litter box next to her food bowl or bed. Cats do not like to eliminate where they eat or sleep. If you place a litter box too close to a cat's nest, she may well pick a more comfortable spot, such as behind the couch, far away from her resting and dining area.

Put the litter box in a quiet low-traffic area, such as in a spare bathroom. A corner location is better than out in the open because a cat needs to feel secure. If your cat has only got two directions to watch instead of four – and feels she has an escape route – she'll be more relaxed.



Additionally, some cats are nervous and don't like things too close to them. Even a hanging plant that blows in the breeze or casts shadows can prompt your cat to search for a different location. If you have more than one cat, remember that cats are territorial and hierarchical. So, put their boxes far enough apart to be sure that territorial issues don't come into play if one invades the other's space.

**What kind of litter?** Cats, by nature, dig and scratch in soft soil out of doors, often burying their waste. The litter you provide substitutes for the dirt outside. The big question is: What is the best material to use? There are a number of litter materials to choose from, including clay-type litters and those made from plant materials. Some cats will refuse to eliminate on certain substrates while others prefer different materials for urination and defecation. It's all a matter of taste - both yours and your cats. Does your cat prefer fine sand or chunky pellets? Do you prefer clumping or non-clumping litter? Do you prefer a litter that's ecologically friendly? Is tracking or odor control your most important concern? Either way, there's probably a litter to suit.

Clay is a good absorbent of moisture and odor and a reasonable substitute for fresh soil from the yard. Large granular clay, though economical and absorbent, is often dusty and tracks about the house. Small granular "clumping" litters (also made of clay) have become popular recently due to their excellent absorbency, clumping properties - which lead to the formation of firm balls when moistened - and their ease of disposal. These litters also make litter boxes easier to keep clean.

Environmentally friendly litters are often made of recycled waste products, such as newspaper. They can also be made of biodegradable material, including wheat, corn and wood chips that break down easily in landfills. Some of these litters have the consistency of fine sand while others come in pelleted form. But how do you choose? You may not like the dust of fine litter and your cat may not like the extra work of covering stool with, what amounts to, small rocks. Some choices can be tough.

Silica gel litters have become increasingly popular. These clear plastic beads are neat to look at and absorb odor well. When your cat urinates in the box adorned with these litters you can actually hear a snap, crackle and pop as the beads soak up the liquid. This litter is good for extended periods, about 3 to 4 weeks in most instances. But remember, the litter can only hold so much moisture and must be changed eventually. Also, the beads have a tendency to bounce around the room once they are knocked out of the box.

Once you find a litter your cat likes, stick with it. Don't buy whatever is on sale this week. Cats are very particular and litter changes can lead to unwelcome modifications in bathroom habits.

**How often should I change litter?** Try to remove feces and moistened litter daily. Regular scooping will keep the box from becoming an odor source for your home and maintain it as an attractive place for your cat. Depending on the buildup of soiled litter and odors, completely

clean out the box and replenish it with fresh litter every so often. When changing the litter, you should wash the box with warm, soapy water, but remember to rinse it thoroughly before refilling it with litter. And never, clean the box with harsh chemicals, as doing so will likely cause your cat to turn his nose up what will be perceived as an olfactorily repugnant offering.

## Vaccination Basics/Common Cat Viruses

**4 in 1 – FVRCP:** The 3 in 1 vaccination provides protection from Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR), Calicivirus (C), and Panleukopenia (P). This vaccination may start as early as 6 weeks in healthy cats, booster every 2-4 weeks until at least 12 weeks old, then administered every 1-3 years depending on local veterinary protocols. Cats/kittens adopted from us will be up-to-date on this combo vaccine.

**Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR)** This is the most widespread upper-respiratory virus to which cats are susceptible. FVR is very serious in young kittens, but cats of all ages are susceptible. Clinical signs include: moderate fever, ocular discharge, nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, and abortions in pregnant cats. Treatment is difficult and limited to supportive and symptomatic therapy. Recovered cats become carriers for life and can shed the virus intermittently, especially during periods of stress. This "chronic carrier" condition makes prevention most important. Vaccination is the best means of prevention and control.

**Calicivirus (C):** Feline Calicivirus is another of the major upper-respiratory viruses to which cats are susceptible. It is widespread, highly contagious, and accounts for about 40% of the respiratory diseases in cats. The severity of the infection varies with the strain of the virus present. Clinical signs include: moderate fever, pneumonia and ulcers or blisters on the tongue. The only treatment option is supportive and symptomatic therapy. Calicivirus also can create a "chronic carrier" state, in which recovered cats become carriers for life. These carriers shed the virus continuously, making prevention very important. Vaccination is highly recommended.

**Panleukopenia (P):** Panleukopenia, or feline distemper, is a contagious viral disease that primarily affects young kittens, but any aged cat is susceptible. This virus is generally widespread, and natural exposure is common. Despite early maternal protection, infection of newborn kittens is frequent. Clinical signs include: fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, depression, diarrhea, dehydration, and death. Treatment of infected cats is difficult, and mortality in kittens is very high. Even when recovery occurs, a kitten may become a carrier and infect others. The most effective means of controlling this disease is early vaccination.

**Chlamydia:** Feline chlamydiosis is also known as pneumonitis. Chlamydia psittaci is directly responsible for 15% to 20% of all feline respiratory diseases. It is extremely contagious, especially in young kittens. Chlamydia causes a local infection of the mucous membranes of the eyes. Clinical signs include: mild-to-severe conjunctivitis, excessive tearing, sneezing, heavy



salivation and coughing. The disease may progress to lung involvement. Treatment involves the use of topical antibiotics for several weeks. Vaccination is the preferred method for prevention.

**Possible side effects from the 3 in 1 (FVRCP) vaccine include lethargy, depression, fever and anorexia in some cats. However, these side effects are usually transient. Please contact your vet if symptoms continue.**

**Rabies:** Classic signs of rabies in cats are changes in behavior (including aggression, restlessness and lethargy), increased vocalization, loss of appetite, weakness, disorientation, paralysis, seizures and even sudden death. Once a cat is 4 months old, they are old enough to receive a rabies vaccine. Rabies vaccines are highly recommended, especially if your cat spends any time outdoors. Any cat over 4 months old that is adopted from us will be up to date on their rabies vaccine.

**Feline Leukemia (FeLV):** This virus causes a fatal infection in cats. There is no cure. It is similar to Leukemia in humans, and can also cause cancer. This virus has the ability to break down the cat's protective immune response such that the cat is unable to fight off infections that it would normally be able to resist. Cats can be born with this virus, or contract it from other cats. However, the virus can be prevented if the cat is not already infected. We also recommend the FeLV test to all cat owners if their cat has never been tested. Please talk to your vet to determine if your cat should be vaccinated.

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV):** This virus is a slow-acting virus that weakens a cat's immune system. This means that they can be more susceptible to diseases or colds. It's difficult to spread to other cats, but can be transmitted via bite wounds. Cats can still live long, healthy lives with FIV, they just need routine checkups and a clean environment. There are often false positives when testing for FIV in kittens under 6 months old, so any kittens testing positive should be retested at 6 months.

## Coping with Allergies

At least 1 in 3 cat owners has allergies to their feline companion. For many pet lovers, the benefits of animal companionship outweigh the drawbacks of allergy symptoms. Yet, despite that statistic, cats are the most popular pet in America. There are ways to co-exist with your fluffy allergen.

First, it is important to note that cat allergies are triggered by a protein in the cat's skin, saliva and urine and NOT by the hair itself. That said, cats do groom themselves several times during the day hence leaving tiny particles of this protein (called dander) on the fur. This becomes airborne when it dries, allowing it to be inhaled or stick to various surfaces in your home, including carpeting, furniture, walls and bedding. You may also find you are allergic to Siamese

but not Persians, or orange tabbies but not black cats. Be aware that kittens often do not cause allergic reactions until they become adults. You might want to consider an adult cat you do not react to rather than take a chance on a kitten only to find you are extremely sensitive to it when it grows up. You should consult an allergist to determine if you are truly allergic to cats, and/or other allergens. Generally, people who are allergic to one thing are allergic to several. Common allergens are pollen, mold, grass, trees, and dust mites. Allergies often work in combination, so exposure to one allergen can intensify your reaction to another. You may want to consider medications, immunotherapy (allergy shots) or simple housekeeping practices to reduce your exposure.

### Top Ten Tips for Coping with Allergies to Cats

1. Always have a “safe” room where you can retreat, generally your bedroom. Do not allow the cat in this room. Do NOT let the cat sleep on your bed!!! Keep an air purifier (ideally with a HEPA filter) in this room as well. Wash bedding in hot water (140F) at least twice a month. This will also kill off dust mites (another big allergen).
2. Thoroughly clean your home to remove cat allergens from carpets, drapes, upholstered furniture, walls. Vacuum often using a filter with a high allergy containment rating. You might want to consider replacing carpeting with hardwood flooring.
3. Check with your veterinarian for products that can reduce dander. These can be wiped over the cat’s fur. Or, try a micro fiber cloth. If your cat is agreeable, you can try bathing your cat weekly. Sometimes wiping the cat with a cloth moistened with distilled water will do the trick.
4. If possible, have someone who is non-allergic do the bathing/grooming, and restrict the grooming to an easy to clean room.
5. Consult an allergist to help determine the most effective form of allergy control/treatment. Find a doctor who understands your commitment to your cat.
6. Place allergen-impermeable covers on mattresses, box springs and pillows to prevent previously accumulated allergens from escaping and from allowing more allergens to be captured.
7. Medications (over-the-counter and prescription).
8. Allergy shots (immunotherapy).
9. Ventilate the house frequently and keep furnaces, air ducts and air conditioner filters clean.
10. Wash your hands after handling the cat...and do not touch your eyes!!

## 10 Tips For Moving With Pets

Moving to a new home can be stressful on your pets, but there are many things you can do to make the process as painless as possible.

1. **Update your pet’s tag.** Make sure your pet is wearing a sturdy collar with an identification tag that is labeled with your current contact information. The tag should

include your destination location, telephone number, and cell phone number so that you can be reached immediately during the move.

2. **Ask for veterinary records.** If you're moving far enough away that you'll need a new vet, you should ask for a current copy of your pet's vaccinations. You also can ask for your pet's medical history to give to your new vet, although that can normally be faxed directly to the new medical-care provider upon request. Depending on your destination, your pet may need additional vaccinations, medications, and health certificates. Have your current vet's phone number handy in case of an emergency, or in case your new vet would like more information about your pet.
3. **Keep medications and food on hand.** Keep at least one week's worth of food and medication with you in case of an emergency. Vets can't write a prescription without a prior doctor/patient relationship, which can cause delays if you need medication right away. You may want to ask for an extra prescription refill before you move. The same preparation should be taken with special therapeutic foods — purchase an extra supply in case you can't find the food right away in your new area.
4. **Seclude your pet from chaos.** Pets can feel vulnerable on moving day. Keep them in a safe, quiet, well-ventilated place, such as the bathroom, on moving day with a "Do Not Disturb! Pets Inside!" sign posted on the door. There are many light, collapsible travel crates on the market if you choose to buy one. However, make sure your pet is familiar with the new crate before moving day by gradually introducing him or her to the crate before your trip. Be sure the crate is well-ventilated and sturdy enough for stresschewers; otherwise, a nervous pet could escape.
5. **Prepare a first aid kit.** First aid is not a substitute for emergency veterinary care, but being prepared and knowing basic first aid could save your pet's life. A few recommended supplies: Your veterinarian's phone number, gauze to wrap wounds or to muzzle your pet, adhesive tape for bandages, non-stick bandages, towels, and hydrogen peroxide (3 percent). You can use a door, board, blanket or floor mat as an emergency stretcher and a soft cloth, rope, necktie, leash, or nylon stocking for an emergency muzzle.
6. **Play it safe in the car.** It's best to travel with your dog in a crate; second-best is to use a restraining harness. When it comes to cats, it's always best for their safety and yours to use a well-ventilated carrier in the car. Secure the crate or carrier with a seat belt and provide your pet with familiar toys. Never keep your pet in the open bed of a truck or the storage area of a moving van. In any season, a pet left alone in a parked vehicle is vulnerable to injury and theft. If you'll be using overnight lodging, plan ahead by searching for pet-friendly hotels. Have plenty of kitty litter and plastic bags on hand, and keep your pet on its regular diet and eating schedule.
7. **Get ready for takeoff.** When traveling by air, check with the airline about any pet requirements or restrictions to be sure you've prepared your pet for a safe trip. Some airlines will allow pets in the cabin, depending on the animal's size, but you'll need to purchase a special airline crate that fits under the seat in front of you. Give yourself plenty of time to work out any arrangements necessary including consulting with your

veterinarian and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If traveling is stressful for your pet, consult your veterinarian about ways that might lessen the stress of travel.

8. **Find a new veterinary clinic and emergency hospital.** Before you move, ask your vet to recommend a doctor in your new locale. Talk to other pet owners when visiting the new community, and call the state veterinary medical association (VMA) for veterinarians in your location. When choosing a new veterinary hospital, ask for an impromptu tour; kennels should be kept clean at all times, not just when a client's expected. You may also want to schedule an appointment to meet the vets. Now ask yourself: Are the receptionists, doctors, technicians, and assistants friendly, professional and knowledgeable? Are the office hours and location convenient? Does the clinic offer emergency or specialty services or boarding? If the hospital doesn't meet your criteria, keep looking until you're assured that your pet will receive the best possible care.
9. **Prep your new home for pets.** Pets may be frightened and confused in new surroundings. Upon your arrival at your new home, immediately set out all the familiar and necessary things your pet will need: food, water, medications, bed, litter box, toys, etc. Pack these items in a handy spot so they can be unpacked right away. Keep all external windows and doors closed when your pet is unsupervised, and be cautious of narrow gaps behind or between appliances where nervous pets may try to hide. If your old home is nearby, your pet may try to find a way back there. To be safe, give the new home owners or your former neighbors your phone number and a photo of your pet, and ask them to contact you if your pet is found nearby.
10. **Learn more about your new area.** Once you find a new veterinarian, ask if there are any local health concerns such as heartworm or Lyme disease, or any vaccinations or medications your pet may require. Also, be aware of any unique laws. For example, there are restrictive breed laws in some cities. Homeowner associations also may have restrictions — perhaps requiring that all dogs are kept on leashes. If you will be moving to a new country, carry an updated rabies vaccination and health certificate. It is very important to contact the Agriculture Department or embassy of the country or state to which you're traveling to obtain specific information on special documents, quarantine, or costs to bring the animal into the country.

## How To Find Pet Friendly Housing

The Bay Area is one of the most pet-friendly areas around, but when it comes time to move with your animals, it doesn't always feel like that. The signs you've been seeing for "Dogs OK!" disappear or the restrictions that landlords impose seem insurmountable. We've gathered a few basic tips to make this process as smooth as possible.

**Plan Ahead Time-Wise.** As much as possible (and sometimes it's not), start looking early. If you know your lease will be up, or you hate where you live, start looking in advance. Pet-friendly rentals are often picked up quickly, and it's good to start looking for the right spot earlier rather than later.

**Know What You're Up Against.** "Pets OK!" is often a little misleading. Some landlords think of "pets" in the narrowest sense of the word. This might be because of insurance policies, previous bad experiences, low expectations, or ignorance. The kinds of things that "Pets OK!" might not include: dogs over 20 pounds, "power breeds" like pit bull type dogs, Rottweilers or shepherds, multiple animals, cats or dogs (one or the other), animals other than cats or dogs, indoor pets, outdoor pets, etc. This list can seem overwhelming, but you and your pet(s) can find your perfect new home.

**Plan Ahead Strategy-Wise.** Once you know what you're facing, you can prepare to call, email, or meet potential landlords. There are a few things that will already have made your life easier, but if you haven't done them, this is your excuse to do them:

\*Spay/neuter your pet, and make sure his shots are up-to-date. (All of our animals come fixed).

\*For dogs, reinforce any basic training like not jumping on people, staying home alone without barking.

\*Reinforce potty training/litter box training.

Now go back to the list of all of the things that landlords might not be prepared to deal with and preempt them. For example, research rental insurance, and provide proof of purchase if you already have it. Explain that your indoor animal has never (if this is true) scratched, dug, clawed, or chewed any furniture/walls/floors. If your animal is quiet and doesn't disturb neighbors, explain this. If a potential landlord seems on the fence, offer an additional pet deposit. Consider this money in a pet emergency account that you have saved for this occasion: it is worth it to keep your pet with you forever.

If possible, prepare a pet resume (link to <http://www.bayrentals.com/~bar/petres.html>), with references to previous landlords, family members, pet sitters, or friends who can vouch for your pet's good behavior. It is our experience that the presentation of these resumes is as important as the references themselves.

### **Where to Find Rentals:**

\*[Craigslist](#) is probably the most comprehensive place to look.

\*Friends, family, other networks. Put the word out: your people will want you and your pets to find the best possible place.

\*Your vet, pet sitter, other animal-people. Ask at the vet or pet stores if you can post a "housing wanted" ad at the front desk.

\*INFO FOR PIT BULL OWNERS: <http://www.badrap.org/renting-your-dog>

# A Poison Safe Home

## **Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pet**

- Alcoholic beverages, Avocado, Chocolate, Coffee, Fatty foods, Macadamia nuts, Moly/spoiled foods, Onions, Raisins, Grapes, Salt, Yeast, Garlic, Foods sweetened with Xylitol

## **Warm Weather Hazards**

- Animal toxins (toads, insects, spiders, snakes and scorpions), Blue-green algae in ponds, Citronella candles, Cocoa mulch, Compost piles, Fertilizers, Flea products, Outdoor plants and plant bulbs, Swimming-pool treatment supplies

## **Cold Weather Hazards**

- Antifreeze, Liquid potpourri, Ice melting products, rat and mouse bait

## **Medication**

Common examples of human medications that can be potentially lethal to pets, even in small doses, include:

- Pain killers, Cold medicines, Anti-cancer drugs, Antidepressants, Vitamins, Diet Pills

## **Common Household Hazards**

- Fabric softener sheets, mothballs, Post-1982 pennies (due to high concentration of zinc)

## **Holiday Hazards**

- Christmas tree water (may contain fertilizers and bacteria, which, if ingested, can upset the stomach), Electrical cords, Ribbons or tinsel (can become lodged in the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction—most often occurs with kittens!), Batteries, Glass ornaments

## **Non-toxic Substances for Dogs and Cats**

The following substances are considered to be non-toxic, although they may cause mild gastrointestinal upset in some animals:

- Water-based paints, Toilet-bowl water, Silica gel, Poinsettia, Cat litter, Glue traps, Glow jewelry



## **What To Do If Your Pet Is Poisoned**

Don't panic. Rapid response is important, but panicking can interfere with the process of helping your pet.

Take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved. This may be of great benefit to your vet and/or APCC toxicologists, as they determine what poison or poisons are involved. In the event that you need to take your pet to a local veterinarian, be sure to take the product's container with you. Also, collect in a sealable plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

If you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance, even if you do not notice any adverse effects. Sometimes, even if poisoned, an animal may appear normal for several hours or for days after the incident.

### **Call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**

The telephone number is (888) 426-4435. There is a \$65 consultation fee for this service.

Be ready with the following information:

- The species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved.
- The animal's symptoms.
- Information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known), the amount of the agent involved and the time elapsed since the time of exposure.
- Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the APCC.

# Get Involved

**Volunteer!** Are you interested in joining hundreds of dedicated animal lovers and making a positive difference in the lives of homeless animals? Then consider joining the Hopalong Animal Rescue team! Your time is an incredibly important resource. Volunteers are an integral part of our rescue, and play important roles in the day to day operations of Hopalong. To find out more about volunteering, email [Dani@hopalong.org](mailto:Dani@hopalong.org)

**Foster!** In order to carry out our mission and save animals, we need foster parents to provide a safe, loving home for a cat or dog until a permanent, adoptive home is found. The number of foster homes is directly proportionate to the number of animals we can save. It's that simple. If you are interested in fostering dogs or cats, please email [Dani@hopalong.org](mailto:Dani@hopalong.org)

**Follow us on Facebook:** [facebook.com/hopalongrescue](https://facebook.com/hopalongrescue)

**Follow us on Instagram:** [@hopalonganimalrescue](https://instagram.com/hopalonganimalrescue)

**Follow us on Twitter** [@HopalongRescue](https://twitter.com/HopalongRescue)

**Updates!** We love to hear how your adopted pet is doing! Please send email updates to [info@hopalong.org](mailto:info@hopalong.org)