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Cabarrus Emergency Clinic, Kannapolis: [704-932-1182](tel:7049321182)

Carolina Veterinary Specialists, Matthews: [704-815-3939](tel:7048153939)

Carolina Veterinary Specialists, Charlotte: [704-504-9608](tel:7045049608)

CARE (Charlotte Animal Referral and Emergency), Charlotte:
[704-457-2300](tel:7044572300)

Veterinary Emergency Group, Charlotte: [980-880-6062](tel:9808806062)

Pet Poison Hotline: [888-426-4435](tel:8884264435)

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New Kitten Checklist

Preparation:

- Find a Veterinarian (We hope you choose us!)
- Research Pet Insurance
- Cover electrical outlets
- Cover trash cans
- Secure furniture
- Remove toxins

KITTEN PROOF EVERYTHING!



Essentials:

- Bed
- Litter Box and Litter
- Bowls
- Toys (try to pick toys that are not easily ingested)
- Collars with ID information
- Food
 - Use wet food if your kitten is younger than 6 weeks
 - ***We recommend Purina, Hills Science Diet, or Royal Canin. Under the age of 1 year should be fed a kitten formula. DO NOT FEED GRAIN FREE.***

Home Grooming:

- Nail Clippers: please refer to the article below to see how to make sure your kitten enjoys nail trims!



New Routine with Your Pet

Daily:

- Make sure to provide fresh food and water
 - Water always, feed 2-3 times a day
- Schedule playtimes (around 4 a day)

Weekly:

Brush your pet at least twice a week, certain breeds may require a more or less frequent brushing schedule.

Monthly:

- Trim your pet's nails following Dr. Sophia Yin's protocol (<https://cattledogpublishing.com/blog/nail-trims-in-kittens/>)
- Give flea/tick/ heartworm medications. Please avoid any medicated flea shampoos.

Every 6 months:

- Schedule your semi-annual vaccine visit, and refill heartworm, flea and tick prevention.

Yearly:

- Schedule your yearly vaccines, wellness exam, and annual lab work.

Every 2 Years:

- Be prepared for a professional dental cleaning under anesthesia. Some breeds may need this sooner, or later.



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What Vaccines Does Your Kitten Need?

Rabies: CORE vaccine

- Rabies is a viral infection, caused by a virus secreted in saliva. It affects a cat's nervous system, including the spinal cord and brain, and is fatal once symptoms present themselves. As there is no cure for rabies, keeping up with regular vaccinations is essential. This vaccine is required *by law*.

FVRCP (Distemper): CORE vaccine

- This is a combination vaccine that protects cats against feline viral rhinotracheitis (feline herpes), calicivirus, and feline panleukopenia (feline distemper). The feline herpes virus and calicivirus are both major causes of upper respiratory infections in cats with potentially long-term, and even life-long consequences. The panleukopenia virus is very contagious and can be fatal. Similar to the parvovirus in dogs, it manifests primarily as a gastrointestinal disease with suppression of the immune system. Infected cats typically display lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, and a high fever.

Feline Leukemia Vaccine:

- Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is a virus that infects only cats. It depresses the immune system and cats tend to remain infected for life. FeLV is an important cause of anemia in cats and can cause several types of cancers. It is found worldwide and is transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids (such as from a bite), but it can also be transmitted from mother to kitten. Based on recommendations by the American Association of Feline Practitioners, current research and expert opinion recommend FeLV vaccination for all kittens, and then on an as-needed basis for adult cats. Although the FeLV vaccine is not considered a core vaccine in adult indoor cats, it is highly recommended for cats that spend time outdoors.



The Secret to Litter training Your Kitten

One of the leading complaints from cat owners is elimination outside of the litter box. Dr. Nicholas Dodman DVM, ACVB, of the Animal Behavior Clinic at Tufts University, reports up to 4% of cats in United States Households (3 million out of 75 million) urinate outside of the litter box weekly, with 1% urinating daily outside of the box. Up to 24% of all cats will have litter box aversion at some point in their life. Litter box aversion, or inappropriate elimination, can involve urination, defecation or both. It can be either a consistent or occasional problem. You may see the cat use the box for either stool or urine, but not both, and they may use the box, then “out of the blue,” not. The damage, smell, and distress of this behavior problem is serious. Many cats are surrendered, re-homed, or euthanized due to this problem. It is difficult to find data on rates of behavior problems in cats surrendered or re-homed since often people will not report this, or will under report this upon surrender. Some cats are turned outside due to this problem and may then be picked up as a stray.

There can be a number of medical, environmental, and behavioral factors that contribute to litter box aversion. I am going to cover some of the most important factors to address in helping a cat be happy about their litter box.



How can you keep your cat happy with the litter box? Here are some of the most important factors for keeping a cat happy with the litter box at various life stages:

Make it easy for the cat to get into the box.

This may sound obvious, but most of the commercial litter boxes are not easy for cats to use. For example, if a kitten gets a litter box that is 6 inches or more in height to enter, it might be difficult for it to get into. So the kitten may start using the carpet or clothing to urinate on just to be able to relieve itself. Now the kitten is learning to prefer carpet or clothes at this early stage in life. In general most cats like a box that they can walk right into with an entry lip no higher than 3 inches. Finding a box like this to purchase is not easy. Litter box manufacturers have not kept up with feline behavior and preferences, so it might be best to make your own.

Is the box easy to find? Is it behind the furnace down the basement steps in the dark? Put the box where it is easy to get to and the cat will not be disturbed by people walking by, dogs nosing in on them or another cat body blocking them. I cannot tell you how many older cats started using the litter box once it was moved upstairs out of the basement.



Keep the box clean – clean for a cat that is.

Cats want to put their urine and stool where there is no other. This is why they hop right in the box as soon as you clean it and put fresh litter in. Re-mark an

area about every 3 days, so if a cat sees or smells stool or urine in the box, it is already marked to them. Scoop the box out completely of all stool and urine twice daily. Now when the cat comes to the newly prepared box, they see the need to go in there. A dirty box tells them to go elsewhere. This is where the sharing problem comes in. Cats do not want to mark in the same place another cat has marked. That is why the suggestion is for a box per cat plus one. Now not all homes have the room for multiple boxes so cleanliness is extremely important here. I think it actually helps to have the box in the living area of the home. People are so concerned about the smell they keep the box clean – now the cat is happier too.



Litter type and amount.

Cats are not only selective about the *where*, they are also selective about *what* they eliminate on. This is called surface preference. While there are many types and brands of litter, most are designed to appeal to the humans, not the cats. The deodorizers and pellet type can be offensive to many cats. In a study by Dr. Jaqueline Nielson, DVM, DACVB, in 2009 ([The Latest Scoop on Litter](#)), scoopable litter with activated charcoal was preferred over litter with baking soda or citrus scents.

The amount of litter in the box makes a difference too. While the litter companies suggest 3 inches or more, just enough to cover the bottom of the box is what most cats actually like. Many cats dig to the smooth surface at the bottom and do not want the litter sliding back down. Also, with less litter, you will be adding in fresh litter which cats love! This new litter is fresh and clean ... just what the cat needs. So, if your box has more than 1 inch of litter in it, dump it all out and put in much less.



How to Clean-Up Cat Urine

The key to success is to thoroughly clean the area, as soon as possible.

Carpet

Get some paper towels and blot up as much as you can as soon as you are first aware the cat used the area. Cover the area with a towel or a pile of paper towels and stand on them. You may have to do this several times. When you have soaked up as much as you possibly can, get out the carpet cleaner or use a few drops of dish detergent mixed with water. Saturate the area with this, and just let it sit on the area for an hour or two. No scrubbing. Rinse the area by gently blotting. Wet a sponge with tap water and rinse the area again. Soak the area with club soda for ten minutes. Blot up the club soda and place fresh paper towels or a fresh towel over the area. Weigh down the towels with something heavy, e.g., books, furniture, etc., and leave overnight. In the morning, spray the area with an

enzymatic cleaner. There are many on the market. You will need to follow the directions for the individual enzymatic cleaner. Never use ammonia or ammonia-based products on the carpet. The smell may attract the cat to that area and can encourage cats to urinate in the area. Keep the cat away from the area. If the smell is bad and the cat continues to use this area despite all the cleaning, replace the padding underneath and clean the area under the carpet.

Linoleum

Wipe up the puddle with paper towels or a mop soaked in soapy water. Clean area thoroughly and rinse with warm water. Wipe the area with a sponge dampened with white vinegar. Let the area air-dry.

Hardwood and Cement

Blot up as much liquid as you can, then use an enzymatic cleaner. If the smell is strong, or if this has concrete, or sand down, bleach, and refinish your hardwood floors.

Laundry

Machine-wash your laundry using a cup of white vinegar and no detergent. When the laundry cycle finishes, add detergent and wash regularly.

Nail Trim Training

Many owners struggle with trimming their cat's nails. Nail trims, however, are important for your cat's health and to prevent scratches of your furniture or people. Nails that become too long have the potential to cause pain, difficulty walking, and other medical issues. The goal is to make trimming your cat's nails acceptable for your cat and easy for you. This outcome takes time, patience, and rewards.

There are several low stress handling methods that can be used to make it easier for you to trim nails, such as a towel wrap or allowing the cat to sit comfortably in a lap. Distractions such as toys or food can also be helpful during trimming.

Technique for Kittens

If you have a kitten, your work starts now! Between three and nine weeks, kittens are at an important age for socialization. Now is the time to expose your kitten to other people, animals, and situations such as nail trims. Treats are the best rewards to use with your kitten. This will help them associate nail trims with a positive experience.



- First, figure out what position your kitten prefers. Choose a position that will keep your kitten at ease and that will allow you to deliver treats effectively. Many kittens prefer to remain standing during a nail trim.
- Get your supplies ready so that everything is prepared before you start handling your kitten, such as a towel or blanket for them to sit on, high value food rewards, nail trimmers, styptic powder to stop bleeding if a nail is trimmed too

short.

- Create a positive association with having feet handled. Touch your kitten's feet when they are feeling relaxed and eating treats. The goal is for your kitten to feel comfortable with being touched, so discontinue touching them if they appear stressed or start to wiggle. If your kitten is uncomfortable with this, touch their feet for a shorter duration or touch a less sensitive area such as their shoulder.



This kitten is being fed treats while lying on their back and getting their feet handled. This will help the kitten adapt to getting their nails trimmed and associate the experience with food. This kitten has already learned that lying on their back is a pleasant experience, however, not all kittens will enjoy lying on their back.

- When you can handle their feet, then you want your kitten to associate the trimmers with a positive experience. You can try trimming one nail while they are relaxed. Give them a treat quickly after you have trimmed it. Give the kitten a break and practice again during a different session. Your kitten should not be made to hold still for all their nails to be trimmed during the first few sessions. You also do not want your kitten to be afraid of lying on your lap, thinking that their nails will be trimmed every time, so make sure you hold them there sometimes without doing anything other than loving them up.

- A slow and careful approach is necessary to avoid overwhelming your kitten. Remember, nail trims can be a positive experience! The experiences kittens have with getting their feet touched and nails trimmed when they are young set the tone for how they will react to nail trims later in life. If your kitten becomes too stressed, give them a break and engage your kitten in play. Start again at a different time when they are more comfortable.



CREATING HARMONY IN MULTIPLE CAT HOMES

The domestic cat is a social animal; however, not all cats will get along well together when there are multiple cats in restricted spaces. These techniques help promote harmony. Serious aggression needs a more comprehensive treatment plan.

Resources:

- Resources should be plentiful and dispersed throughout the environment. Critical resources include:
 1. Litter boxes (See the handout Litter Box Tips for more information.)
 2. Feeding and water stations
 3. Scratching posts/pads
 4. Resting perches at different vertical heights
- Single cat-sized resting perches at different vertical heights throughout the home significantly expand the usable space.
- Resting perches should be just big enough to accommodate one cat comfortably; larger spaces may allow for confrontations.
 - Avoid creating spaces where a cat can trap another cat easily; offer more than one exit route from an area/resource site.
- Catnip toys can arouse certain cats into a highly reactive/aggressive state. If this occurs, the toys should be removed from the environment.

Techniques to prevent/diffuse tension:

- Cats with high play drives often bother more sedate/elderly cats. Owners should channel this excess playful energy onto appropriate toys in short owner-initiated play sessions daily.
- Cats who harass other cats in the house should be fitted with a cat-safe collar with bells to provide an advanced warning system to other cats.

- Daily short-term segregation of cats may provide restful periods; all cats should have access to a litter box and water at all times.
- Blocking eye contact between two cats caught in a stare down can readily diffuse a tense situation—hold up an inanimate object (pillow cushion, paper) between the cats. When tension is reduced, the cats can be independently redirected onto another activity (e.g., play with a toy) or safely segregated.
- The synthetic pheromone, Feliway, may help reduce overall tension in multiple cat homes.
 - Transfer of scent from one cat to another may help create an affiliation or familiarity between cats. This scent transfer may occur passively as the cats come in contact with the same inanimate objects or may occur actively as the cats rub or groom each other. Humans can augment this scent transfer by petting cats with a common towel/rag/glove on a daily basis.



Making Your Outdoor Cat Indoor-only

The decision to keep your cat indoors or allow her to go outside is a highly personal one. There are many potential health benefits to keeping your cat indoor-only including reduced risk for traumatic injury, infectious disease, and parasites. If you have decided to make your outdoor cat indoor-only, the following guidelines will help to ease the transition.

Set up a refuge with all of the resources the cat needs, food and water bowls, a perch (preferably near a window so that she can look outside), a place to sleep, hiding places (brown paper bags or cardboard boxes), a scratching post and toys. This will help your cat get used to you and the experience of being indoors. The refuge will be the cat's home for a while. Make sure that you visit often and leave a radio on while the cat is alone in the room.

If there are no other pets in the home then you may leave the door to the refuge open. If there are other pets please refer to the section on Introducing New Pets. Let the cat venture out when ready. Keep all doors to the outside closed. The cat has been accustomed to being outdoors and may try to get back out. Try to make the indoor environment as interesting as possible. Place perches near windows so that the cat can look out. Perches should be two to three feet tall so the cat can look down on her surroundings. Provide scratching posts at several locations so the cat can exercise her instinct to scratch.

Set aside a play time each day. Use interactive toys such as laser pointers and feather teasers to play with the cat. When you are out, give the cat a choice of toys to play with. Change the toys every few days to keep the cat interested. Hide tasty treats around the house so the cat can hunt for them.

Despite your best efforts, your cat may still have a strong desire to escape to the outdoors. To discourage your cat from dashing out when doors are opened, you can try to make doors seem less appealing. Do this by spraying the cat with a water bottle or rattling a can of pennies if she goes too near an entry door. Citrus scent may also be sprayed on or near the door to keep the cat away. The goal is not to punish the cat but to associate the door with something unpleasant.

If you would like the cat to safely enjoy a little of the great outdoors you can train her to wear a harness and take her for leash walks or let her out onto a sun porch or screened enclosure.

Bringing a Previously Stray Cat Indoors

Stray cats are domestic cats who have been abandoned or have strayed from home and become lost. Strays have known human companionship and can usually be re-socialized and adopted successfully. A stray cat may be comfortable approaching you and allowing you to pet it and will return if food is left out. Feral cats are cats that have lived their whole life with little or no human contact. Adult feral cats avoid humans and cannot be re-socialized. They are more content living outdoors. Attempting to trap a cat that is feral presents a serious injury risk for inexperienced handlers. For more information on helping feral cats in your area please visit Alley Cat Allies <http://www.alleycat.org/resources.html>

The first step in adopting a stray cat is to visit your veterinarian. Visit your vet before you bring the cat into contact with your family and pets. The cat should have a physical exam, be tested for feline leukemia and FIV, be vaccinated for feline distemper and rabies and be de-wormed. If the cat is intact it should be spayed or neutered. A thorough veterinary exam is important to protect your family and other animals in the household from infectious disease.

To introduce the new cat follow the same guidelines as those for making an outdoor cat indoor-only (see Making Your Outdoor Cat Indoor-Only). Be patient, and keep the cat happy and busy to help her to re-adjust to human companions and indoor living.



Taking Your Cat to the Veterinarian

Cat during examination by doctor

Imagine how you would feel if someone suddenly picked you up, put you in a box, took you for a ride in a strange vehicle, and then let an unknown person in a white coat probe your most delicate areas and stick needles in you! That is what the experience of going to the veterinarian seems like to cats. There are steps you can take to make this a less frightening experience for your cat.

Get your cat used to her cat carrier well before her veterinary appointment. Leave the open carrier sitting out so that she can explore it on her own. Place catnip or treats in the carrier to get her to look inside. You can even leave the carrier out permanently as a bed or hiding place for the cat (see Free Access Crate Training).

Get the cat used to going for rides in the carrier. Put her into the carrier with a special treat and drive around the block a few times. The cat will be less fearful if she sees that a ride in the carrier does not always end at the vet's office. She will also get more accustomed to riding in the car. When the cat is riding in your car, turn the stereo down to a low volume, roll up the windows and turn on the air vents. Too much noise from the stereo or the road can frighten the cat. Never put your cat into a hot car or leave her there unattended for any length of time!

Attempt to make the trip to the vet a positive experience. Give the cat special treats or toys at the vet's office. Schedule appointments at the least busy time of day and call ahead to make sure the vet is running on time. Sitting in a crowded waiting room with barking dogs and crying children will only create more anxiety for your cat. If your cat is very fearful of dogs you can go to a clinic that only sees cats.

When you bring the cat home, make sure that the cat's refuge is available. Cats recognize one another by smell. When your cat returns home, other cats may treat her as an outsider because she smells like the vet's office. You may need to slowly reintroduce her to avoid conflict (see Introducing a New Cat).

In an emergency you may need to take the cat to the vet without the opportunity to prepare her. In this case you can wrap her in a towel and place her in the carrier.

When Your Cat is Hospitalized

If your cat needs to be hospitalized-make sure the cat has a refuge available when she comes home. Cats recognize one another by scent. When your cat returns

home, other cats may treat her as an outsider because she smells like the hospital. You may need to slowly reintroduce her to avoid conflict.

When Your Cat is Sick or Recovering at Home

If your cat is not feeling well you should always consult your veterinarian. For minor illnesses the veterinarian may prescribe medicine and treatments to be given at home. Alternatively the cat may be returning home to recover after being hospitalized. The cat will need to rest quietly at home. Provide her with a refuge and don't allow other pets into that room. Make sure that human family members also respect the privacy of the refuge.

One person should be assigned as the primary caregiver for the cat while she is sick. That person should spend quiet time with the cat. Don't try to handle her too much unless she is receptive. Carefully follow the veterinarian's instructions for administering medicine. Be gentle with the cat when medicating her and give her treats and praise to help make it a positive experience. If your cat is not good at taking medicine, ask the veterinarian about compounding the medicine with a flavored base such as fish or chicken.



Important Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Pet

By spaying or neutering your pet, you'll help control the pet homelessness crisis, which results in millions of healthy dogs and cats being euthanized in the United States each year simply because there aren't enough homes to go around. There are also medical and behavioral benefits to spaying (female pets) and neutering (male pets) your animals.

Here are some of the medical benefits:

Your female pet will live a longer, healthier life. Spaying helps prevent uterine infections and breast tumors, which are malignant or cancerous in about 50 percent of dogs and 90 percent of cats. Spaying your pet before her first heat offers the best protection from these diseases. Neutering your male companion prevents testicular cancer and some prostate problems.

And behavioral benefits:

Your spayed female pet won't go into heat. While cycles can vary, female felines usually go into heat four to five days every three weeks during breeding season. To advertise for mates, they'll yowl and urinate more frequently—sometimes all over the house! Your male dog will be less likely to roam away from home. An intact male will do just about anything to find a mate, including finding creative ways escape from the house. Once he's free to roam, he risks injury in traffic and fights with other male animals. Your neutered male may be better behaved. Unneutered dogs and cats are more likely to mark their territory by spraying strong-smelling urine all over the house. Your dog might be less likely to mount other dogs, people and inanimate objects after he's neutered. Some aggression problems may be avoided by early neutering.

Spaying/neutering your pets is also highly cost-effective. The cost of your pet's spay/neuter surgery is far less than the cost of having and caring for a litter.

Debunking Spay/Neuter Myths and Misconceptions

Spaying or neutering will not cause your pet to become overweight. Lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your pet to pack on the extra pounds—not neutering. Your pet will remain fit and trim if you continue to provide exercise and monitor her food intake. Neutering is not a quick fix for all behavior problems. Although neutering your pet often reduces undesirable behaviors caused by a higher level of testosterone, there's no guarantee that your dog's behavior will

change after he's neutered. Although the surgery will reduce the amount of testosterone in your dog's system, it won't eliminate the hormone completely. Neutering will also not reduce behaviors that your pet has learned or that have become habitual. The effects of neutering are largely dependent on your dog's individual personality, physiology and history.



MICROCHIPPING

When your pet is under anesthesia for their spay or neuter, we recommend getting them microchipped. A microchip is a rice sized chip in between their shoulder blades that can be scanned and contains your information if your pet is found.

IT IS NOT A GPS TRACKER.

Don't think it'll never happen to your dog or cat. Unlike a collar, which can easily break, fall off, or be removed, a microchip is a reliable way to get your contact information—as well as vital information about your dog's medical conditions—and increase the odds he'll be returned to you if he's found. We will provide the first year of registration for you, but the microchip will always work even if you opt out of paying for premium registration.

Common Parasites your Cat Encounters:

- **Fleas** are a common parasite that bite, transmit disease, and cause your dog to itch, making them very miserable. Fleas also suck blood, and when left unchecked, this can cause lethargy, weakness, and even death if not caught and treated in time. Common conditions and infections from fleas include flea allergic dermatitis and tapeworms. To make sure a flea infestation doesn't begin or become a vicious cycle in your home, *all* your pets, including indoor-only cats or dogs, need to be on a year-round preventative. Once fleas enter your home, they can quickly take hold (each adult female flea can lay anywhere from 20–50 eggs each day) and cause an infestation that can be very difficult to completely get rid of.
- **Ticks, Mites, and Lice** can be found anywhere in the United States - and at any time of the year. Like fleas, ticks suck a pet's blood, and when left unchecked can also cause related health problems. Ticks can also transmit several diseases. Mites and Lice contribute to many of our dermatology cases.
 - **Mosquitoes** can transmit many diseases, and just a single bite from an infected mosquito can put your cat at risk for developing heartworm disease. While cats that spend lots of time outside (when mosquitoes are feeding) may have a higher risk, even cats that rarely or never go outside are at risk for heartworm disease. Heartworm disease in cats is often difficult to diagnose, and tends to result in sudden death.

These common parasites your cat encounters are easily prevented with products available from your veterinarian. There are chewable pills, or topical solutions. Your veterinarian should be your go-to advisor to help you figure out the products and plans that are best suited for your pets.



Prevention is a healthier, less expensive way to keep your cat healthy and safe from the many parasites they are likely to encounter.

Keeping your pet on a full-year preventative plan will help give you peace of mind that they're protected from parasites all year long.

Pet Insurance

Pet insurance typically covers a wide range of medical expenses related to unexpected accidents and illnesses. While coverage can vary depending on the policy, many pet insurance plans include the following:

Accidents: Coverage for injuries sustained from unexpected accidents, such as broken bones, lacerations, or swallowed objects.

Illnesses: Coverage for acute illnesses and chronic conditions like ear infections, UTIs, cancer, diabetes, and allergies.

Diagnostic tests: Coverage for laboratory tests, X-rays, MRI scans, and other diagnostic procedures.

Surgeries: Coverage for planned procedures and emergency surgeries.

Medications: Coverage for prescription medications, including ongoing medications for chronic conditions.

Hospitalization: Coverage for overnight stays at the veterinary hospital and intensive care.

Hereditary and congenital (present from birth) conditions: Coverage for breed-specific or genetic conditions that may require medical attention.

Some companies may also offer additional coverage for preventive care, wellness visits, dental procedures, behavioral therapy, and alternative therapies like acupuncture or chiropractic treatments. It's important to carefully review the policy details to understand what is covered and what may be excluded. Pet insurance typically works on a reimbursement basis, where you pay the veterinary bills upfront and then submit a claim to the insurance company for reimbursement. There are a few limitations that impact how you can use a pet insurance policy. Here are some key considerations to keep in mind when selecting a plan:

Waiting periods: All pet insurance companies have mandatory waiting periods before your policy becomes effective, after which time your pet will be covered and you are eligible for claim reimbursement.

Deductibles: Consider your policy's deductible amount, which is how much you need to spend on covered vet bills out-of-pocket before the insurance kicks in. Typically, the lower the deductible, the higher the insurance premium will be.

Reimbursement rate: Once your insurance coverage kicks in (and your deductible is met), you'll be eligible to receive reimbursements for covered costs outlined within the policy at a rate specified at the time of enrollment. Most policies reimburse between 60% and 100% of the cost of eligible expenses.

Payout limits: You can customize the limit on how much your insurance plan will pay. Some plan limits are per condition while others are per year, and some offer unlimited payouts.

Coverage exclusions: Pet insurance works for future medical expenses but does not cover past vet bills or health issues that existed before the pet was insured, known as pre-existing conditions. There may also be exclusions on bi-lateral conditions and hereditary conditions that may apply to your pet.

Choosing the right pet insurance policy can be overwhelming with the many options available. Pet owners can use a free resource like Pawlicy Advisor

(https://www.pawlicy.com/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=S_Brand_R_OAS_Dt_Ex-XX&utm_content=S_Pawlicy_Dt_Ex-XX&utm_term=pawlicy%20advisor&gclid=CjwKCAjw6c63BhAiEiwAF0EH1CVKm0BVES4I2T9IjOFsyk5YfeX-h36NJI3G8gPTO5jjkACQ_vdB6BoCuqEQAvD_BwE&campaignid=20875203728&adgroupid=159817846511&adid=685072623352&device=c&placement=&gad_source=1) to get a personalized recommendation on the best plan for your specific pet, with the ability to compare top companies side-by-side in terms that are easy to understand.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This scale should be used to gauge your pets comfort level. We do not want to push them past FAS of 2 or more, as it can do emotional damage. If you attempt to groom, trim nails, or train for certain situations and your pet is in the ‘yellow’ of this scale, please stop, give them space and call us for further tips.

THE SPECTRUM OF FEAR, ANXIETY & STRESS

RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FIGHT/AGGRESSION (FAS 5)

- Offensive aggression - pupils constricted or dilated, cat leaning forward, ears forward, moving forward, whiskers forward, tail is an inverted L (first inch of tail is horizontal with ground then the tail drops down), rump raised higher than front (on tip toes), staring, may be growling.
- Defensive aggression - ears back, pupils dilated, hunkered down, tail tight or tucked or tail thrashing, whiskers back, hissing, lips pulled back, staring, furrowed brow, could be swatting.



RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FLIGHT/FREEZE/FRET (FAS 4)

- Flight - actively trying to escape, pupils dilated, ears back, whiskers back, tail down and bottle brushed, fleeing, turning to look at stimulus.
- Freeze/Fret - tonic immobility, dilated pupils, body flattened and tense, tail tucked, increased respiratory rate, ears back, staring, whiskers back.



YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 2-3)

- Ears further to the side, more pupil dilation but not completely dilated, increase in respiratory rate, brow furrowed, looking at stimulus instead of looking away, tail tight to body, possible tip of tail moving some, whiskers back, body crouched and leaning away.



GREEN: MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS 1)

- Avoids eye contact, turns head away without moving away, partially dilated pupils, head held just slightly down, slight brow furrowing, whiskers slightly back, ears partially to the side, body shifted slightly away, tail closer to body with possibly some slight flicking.



GREEN: PERKED/INTERESTED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Looking directly but not intensely, tail up and winding, mouth closed with loose lips, ears perked forward, whiskers forward, slight pupil dilation.



GREEN: RELAXED (FAS 0)

(A)



(C)



A: Sleeping

B: Neutral - ears in neutral position, brow soft, eyes soft, mouth closed with relaxed lips, body loose, tail carriage U-shaped, pupils normal dilation.

C: Friendly greeting - tail up and winding, may elevate rear end slightly by standing on toes, ears neutral, forward, or slightly back, might have squinty eyes, brow relaxed, might cheek mark or rub on person or object.

(B)





www.fearfreepets.com

FEAR FREE KITTEN SOCIALIZATION

BINGO!

Making Exposure Positive

Use these bingo squares for ideas on how to socialize your kitten. Socialization and exposure are active processes that are most crucial from two to seven weeks of age but should be practiced well beyond this age range. However, it's important to realize that socialization is not simply about exposure-it's about making it fun and positive from the start.

Think of these experiences as a behavioral investment, like placing pennies in a piggy bank. When done properly, your investment will result in a friendly and outgoing cat. Positive, proactive socialization involves liberal use of food treats (or, for some kittens, interactive play with a toy/attention/petting) to help form positive associations.



Fun Visit at Veterinary Hospital (and grooming salon)	Have visitors to your home	Take your kitten to a friend's or relative's house for a kitten party	Strive for your kitten to meet at least one new person a day during the first 14 weeks	See someone carrying something in hand, such as an umbrella
Explore a minimum of 5 food puzzle toys	Teach your kitten how to play with you	See children playing from a distance	Pair brushing with getting treats	Introduce your kitten to a variety of sounds in a controlled manner
Allow your kitten to experience a minimum of 5 novel non-toxic and non-noxious scents	Discover your kitten's preference for a scratching post and reward her with a treat or a play for using it	Go for a ride in a car within a secured carrier	Acclimate your kitten to wearing a cat harness and leash	Acclimate your kitten to having a towel placed over her
See or meet an adult dog who is healthy, friendly, and relaxed around cats	Walk on 3 different safe and sturdy surfaces such as wood, gravel, sand, metal, concrete, rubber, etc	See and/or meet a person with mobility assistance (wheelchair, walker, crutches)	Acclimate your kitten to a multilevel cat cage	Allow your kitten to explore at least 5 novel objects at her own pace
Taste at least 5 different types of kitten food and treats (dry and canned varieties)	Be exposed to a recording of fireworks at a low and controlled volume	Teach your kitten to love her travel carrier	Teach your kitten to enjoy taking medication (see Pill Your Pet with Kindness handout)	Touch your kitten on various body parts and give her a treat each time



For more information, please visit www.fearfreehappyhomes.com



1. Dr. Sophia Yin: training resources, creator of Low Stress Handling (our hero!)

<https://cattledogpublishing.com/>

2. Veterinary Partner Network: training resources, medical information

<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/>

3. Your Vet Wants You to Know Podcast: podcast on several topics:

<https://yourvetwantsyoutoknow.com/episodes/>

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On behalf of Dr. Condon, and every staff member here- we thank you for allowing us to care for your furry family member. We consider you all family and are here for whatever you need!

