

Cat and Kitten

Adoption Handbook



Share updates or contact us at 785-233-7325 or helpinghands@hhhstopeka.org

Table of Contents

PAGE	CONTENT
4	What's Included in Your Adoption
5	Getting Your New Cat Settled
6	Multi-Cat Household- Introducing Cats
8	What Your New Pet Eats
9	Feeding Schedule
10	Vaccine and Treatments
11	Upper Respiratory Infection
12	Litter Box Issues
14	Keeping Your New Pet Healthy
16	FIV
17	Feline Panleukopenia
19	Kitty Proofing Your Home
20	Cat Body Language
21	Safe Foods For Pets

What's included

The adoption fees help cover the cost of medical care, food, and shelter for all the animals in our care.



Behavior and medical exams

All cats and kittens go through behavior exams and medical exams which will be gone over prior to visiting with the pet. Adopters will be sent home with a copy of the medical history.



Microchip Discount

HHHS uses AKC Reunite for its microchip services. Cats/kittens without microchips can receive one prior to adoption or anytime after adoption for an additional \$10 fee. All microchips will be registered for the life of the pet at the time of adoption.

*If a pet was previously chipped or chipped through a different company, we will send home the company's contact information with the adopter. It will be the adopter's responsibility to transfer ownership over to themselves.



Spay/Neuter

Cats and kittens adopted from HHHS must be altered prior to adoption.



General Vet Care **(while in our care)**

Medical exam

Dewormer

Combo Vaccine

Flea/Tick Prevention

FeLV Test*

Rabies Vaccine*

*age based

Getting Settled

You may have been thinking about bringing home a new friend for a while. Your new feline, however, may be quite surprised by the sudden change in their life. Being in a new place can be scary, even for the most confident feline; there are lots of new sights, sounds, and smells to get used to. Follow these steps to set your feline up to feel safe and confident about their new home.

1. SET UP A SAFE PLACE:

Set up your new feline(s) in a small room, such as a bedroom or large bathroom for the first 1-2 weeks. Make sure your kitty has access to food, water, a litter box, toys, a soft place to sleep, and a place to hide. Felines settle in much more quickly if they can get used to a home a little at a time. If your feline is shy too much freedom, too fast can be overwhelming for them and cause unwanted behaviors.

2. START BONDING:

Give your feline lots of play sessions while in their safe space. If your feline is feisty, get into an early routine of at least two play sessions every day, morning and evening. If your feline is unsure of play or petting at first, start by sitting with them while they eat and offering extra yummy treats. For shy felines, calm, positive interactions are key to them gaining your trust.

3. ARE YOU READY TO EXPLORE?:

Once your feline seems completely at home in their safe space (eating, grooming, using the litter box, and approaching you for attention), they are ready to slowly start exploring the rest of your home. If your feline hasn't shown these behaviors allow them more time in their safe place to get comfortable. As your feline begins to explore the house at first, supervise them to avoid any bad habits or injury. When they cannot be supervised, place them back in their safe area. If they haven't shown all these behaviors, give them more time to get comfortable.

Home Sweet Home

Successfully setting up your home will help encourage good behavior in your feline and help them feel more confident and relaxed. Before you open the door for exploration, take some time to consider what your home looks like through the eyes of your feline.

GOING UP!:

Felines think vertically in their space and it is very important they have options for perching or resting up off the ground. This can include cat trees, tables, desks, a sturdy box on the floor, or even a window sill with a kitty cot.

HIDEY HOLES:

Cats and kittens like to have a safe place to watch the action. Offer places for your kitty to hide or getaway when they are. Do not pull your kitty out from their hidey-hole to force an interaction as this may cause a setback as they build their trust in you. You can use cat trees, covered beds, or even a cardboard box to provide your kitty with a safe cover.

GOOD BATHROOM HABITS:

To help your new cat maintain a lasting habit of using their box, follow these guidelines:

- Place the litter box in a quiet, easily accessible location
- Scoop the box daily, and replace all the litter every 1-2 weeks
- For a multi-cat home, provide one litter box per cat in the home plus one

Litter box accidents are often a result of stress, including stress from transition into a new home. Be patient, and monitor your kitty. If your new cat has more than one litter box accident and you have checked all the above recommendations, contact HHHS for advice.

Multi Cat Household

Bringing home an additional cat can be a very exciting event for us humans; however, it can be very traumatic for all felines involved. It can end in disaster if not approached carefully!



Setting the Scene

Help your new cat settle into your home by keeping him/her in a small room with a litter box, food, water, toys, and a safe place to hide (such as a cat carrier with a towel inside). Choose a room that doesn't interrupt your resident cat's routine. Let him/her become comfortable there for three or four days. **Do not allow the cats to interact during this time.** However, it is fine for the cats to be sniffing under the door and investigating. Switch bedding and other items that have the scent of each of the cats on them. This way each cat can become used to the scent of the other without meeting face to face. Spend quality time with each cat on either side of the door—petting, playing, and relaxing. Again, this will allow them to be aware of each other in a non-stressful situation. This is often reassuring to both cats.

First Interactions

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/her own pace. Forcing the cat to come into new territory will just make the cat increasingly tense and prolong his/her 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, but be sure to keep the toys four or more feet apart when playing.

Sometimes cats play so hard that they forget to be upset about the other cat and start to become accustomed to the other cat's presence. There may be a rivalry for toys, so this may not always work. Treats may also help alleviate this situation, so be sure to give them treats in the presence of the other cats. This will not only distract them, but it will also serve as a reward for not hissing. At the end of the play or treat session immediately separate the cats. This time apart allows them to be able to process the information they gained while they were together. It also allows them both to regain their sense of territory and confidence, which encourages a favorable interaction at their next meeting. Continue this process daily, lengthening the amount of time they are together a little each session. Never punish a cat for aggressive behavior toward another cat. Most owners do this thinking they will teach the cat that the aggressive behavior is inappropriate, but it only ends 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.



Continue to next page

Extra Steps for a Shy Kitty

If the new cat is shy, the introduction must be taken more slowly. He/she will need extra time to settle into his/her new environment and to feel comfortable in her safe room. It may be necessary to repeat the introduction and separation program several times. This separation time is also an excellent time for you to bond with each cat, one at a time so that they do not over-bond to each other. When ready, open the door and allow the cats to interact on their own time. Do not force either cat to go from one space to another.

Supervise their Interactions

Only let them interact for short sessions: ten to fifteen minutes at a time. Then separate them again.

Do this several times a day until you are sure they are tolerating the presence of the other cat, and not fighting, chasing, or watching the other cat intensely. Do not leave them alone together until you are reasonably certain that they will not hurt one another.

Introductions Often Take Time

Some cat-to-cat introductions go very smoothly, while others may take weeks or months before the cats learn to tolerate each other. The best thing to do is to go as slowly as necessary—don't rush the introduction. Please remember that you are hoping and working for a very long-term relationship; being patient at first will pay off! Rushing the introduction will often cause serious problems which may take longer to solve—or in some cases, may never be solved.

Finally, most cats will adjust to living within a multi-cat household. Like people, some will enjoy it more than others. Patience on the part of all concerned will be more likely to produce an enduring peace than anything else. Enjoy your kitties!



Reminders:

- Pay lots of attention to your existing cat throughout the following procedure, including daily exercise (try a cat aerobics or cat dancer toy). This will help your old cat feel more secure that someone else isn't going to take away your affection.
- Have definite, coinciding feeding times for both cats. This is going to greatly help with the speed of a successful introduction. Lots of little feedings, many times a day do more good than only one or two larger ones.
- **Do not at any time physically hold the cats and put them face to face.** That is a surefire way to stimulate aggression! Cats are not very forgiving either. If they are started out on the wrong foot, it is very difficult to undo the damage.
- Always provide an additional litter box in a different location. If you have more than two cats, you will need to provide at least one box per cat. This is to prevent territorial disputes over this very important resource. Remember to clean the boxes daily to encourage correct litter box habits

If you have any questions regarding behaviors, please don't hesitate to give HHHS a call at 785-233-7325 and ask to speak to the behavior department.

What Food Your New Pet Eats



Transforming Lives

At Helping Hands Humane Society, we're proud to feed our pets Hill's® brand pet food.

Why we suggest that you continue feeding your new pet Hill's Science Diet:

- Continuity and consistency of food help reduce digestive distress
 - While feeding Science Diet, you are offering your new pet food that is or has:
 - #1 veterinarian recommended
 - Precise nutrition supports healthy skin, coat, and stool
 - Clinically proven antioxidants for a healthy immune system*
 - Unique foods for healthy dogs and cats of every age, size, and need
 - Natural, great-tasting ingredients*
 - Not artificially colored, flavored, or preserved*
 - Made in the USA with global ingredients you can trust
- *dry food

You will receive a starter bag of food for your new pet and you will receive a \$5 coupon for your first purchase of any Hill's® pet food product.

There are feeding instructions on the sample bag on how to gradually switch your pet over to a different brand of food if you do not continue Science Diet.

Feeding Schedule

RECOMMENDED DAILY FEEDING AMOUNTS

DAILY FEEDING GUIDE

KITTEN AGE	KITTEN WEIGHT	FEEDING AMOUNT
3 - 6 Weeks	2/3 - 1-1/3 lbs (0.3 - 0.6 kg)	1/4 - 1/3 cup (29 - 39 g)
7 - 23 Weeks	1-1/2 - 5-3/4 lbs (0.7 - 2.6 kg)	1/3 - 1 cup (39 - 118 g)
24 - 52 Weeks	5-3/4 - 12 lbs (2.6 - 5.4 kg)	2/3 - 1-1/4 cups (78 - 147 g)
Over 1 Year		1-1/4 cups (147 g)

Recommended daily feeding amounts for kittens with normal activity using a standard 8 oz/250 ml measuring cup which contains approximately 118 g of Purina ONE.

RECOMMENDED DAILY FEEDING AMOUNTS

DAILY FEEDING GUIDE

WEIGHT OF CAT	WEIGHT MAINTENANCE	10% CALORIE REDUCTION
5 - 9 lbs (2.3 - 4.1 kg)	1/3 - 3/4 cup (33 - 74 g)	1/4 - 2/3 cup (24 - 66 g)
10 - 12 lbs (4.5 - 6.3 kg)	3/4 - 1-1/4 cups (74 - 124 g)	2/3 - 1 cup (66 - 99 g)

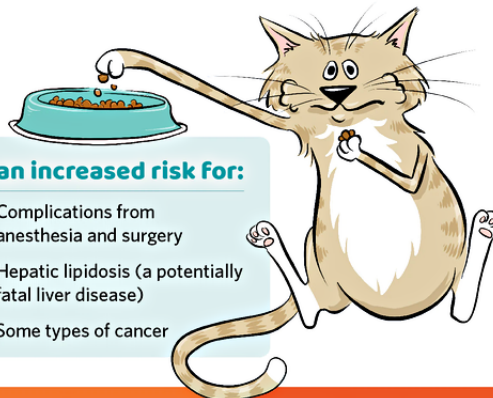
Recommended daily feeding amounts for adult cats with normal activity using a standard 8 oz/250 ml measuring cup which contains approximately 99 g of Purina ONE.

HOW MUCH WET FOOD SHOULD I FEED MY CAT?

Did You Know?

Overweight cats are at an increased risk for:

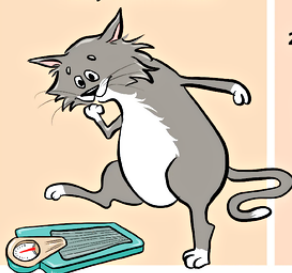
- Congestive heart failure
- Skin disorders
- Infections
- Diabetes mellitus
- Complications from anesthesia and surgery
- Hepatic lipidosis (a potentially fatal liver disease)
- Some types of cancer



Step 1

Take your cat to the vet to determine:

- Ideal weight
- Daily calorie intake



Step 2

Calculate the number of cans per day.

Example:

If the vet calculates 240 calories per day:
240 calories / 73 calories per can
= 3.3 cans per day



Step 3

Divide into portions for feeding throughout the day.

Example:

3.3 cans per day / 3 meals per day
Morning: 1 can
Afternoon: 1 can
Night: 1 1/3 cans

Remember to account for the calories that come from treats and dry food that you offer.



HOW TO CHANGE YOUR PET'S FOOD

Transition from old to new food over a period of 7 to 10 days.

DAYS 1-3



DAYS 4-6



DAYS 7-10



DAY 11



petco

Vaccines and Treatments

All future vaccines and treatments are at the cost of the adopter. Please consult with your veterinarian on due dates for vaccines and treatments, and to get your pet on a vaccine schedule that is right for them.

Name of vaccine or treatment	What it covers	Frequency
Purevax Feline 4	protects against feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia	given to kittens every 2 weeks until they reach their 4 doses, adults receive one dose yearly
Ponazuril	Effective against coccidia	given to kittens upon intake or when needed
Strongid T	general dewormer that treats hookworms and roundworms	given every 2 weeks until they reach their 2 doses, revaccinate one dose yearly
Frontline	topical, fast-acting, long-lasting and waterproof flea and tick protection proven to kill fleas, flea eggs, lice and ticks	monthly for cats 8 weeks and older
Imrab Rabies 1 Tf	prevent infection caused by the rabies virus	Given at 12 weeks old then repeated yearly
Praziquantel	anti-parasitic primarily used to eliminate tapeworm infestations	given to cats upon intake or when needed

The average medical costs for an animal is between \$500 and \$1000 a year. Once an adoption is processed, adopters have 7 days after adoption to schedule an appointment with HHHS vet staff for any shelter related illness. **All future medical costs** will be at the expense of the adopter. To learn more about common illnesses and diseases in cats, speak to your veterinarian

Upper Respiratory Infection

Just like people, when a cat experiences stress, their immune system can become compromised, and as stressed people can succumb to a cold, a stressed cat can also succumb to a similar upper respiratory infection (URI). While all efforts are made to keep our homeless pets comfortable and happy during their stay at HHHS, a shelter is an inherently stressful place and cats can become ill with URI. The most common cause of URI is viral, and typically causes cold-like symptoms, such as sneezing and a runny nose or eyes. In most cases, URI will resolve without needing treatment. However, on some occasions, this mild viral URI can develop a secondary bacterial infection, usually manifesting with green or yellow nasal and/or eye discharge. These cases may require antibiotics to treat the infection, and an examination by a veterinarian is advised.

Going to a new home from the shelter is an exciting event for the entire family, but this can also cause some stress in your new pet causing some cats that appear healthy when they leave HHHS, to succumb to URI once in their new home. Since the viruses that cause URI can be contagious to other cats, if your new cat is showing any signs of URI, please keep them separated from other cats in the household and seek medical advice from your family veterinarian.



Litter Box

Thank you so much for adopting! We have enjoyed having your new cat at our shelter and wish you both many wonderful years together. To help your cat adjust into your new home, we would like to introduce you to the type of litter your cat has been using while at the shelter: Equine Fresh Pine Pellets Horse Bedding



While this is not a standard cat litter, the pine pellets absorb moisture quickly without producing dust that would otherwise clog our air-handling system. You may choose to go with a more standard litter which is perfectly fine. One main reason people surrender cats to a shelter is due to litterbox issues. Often when a litterbox issue occurs, it can be corrected easily without the animal having to be surrendered to a shelter. The following are common reasons a cat may have a litterbox “lapse” in his/her life time.

Litter Box Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Have enough boxes. You need one litter box per cat in the household, plus one extra. Experiment to find a litter your cat likes: clumping, non-clumping, pellets, etc.
- Keep the litter box immaculate; cats are extremely fastidious.
- Use mild dishwashing liquid or hot water and vinegar to clean the box. Never use harsh chemicals like bleach or ammonia.
- Scoop the box every day. Clean the box every two to three days, or at least weekly.
- Place the litter box in a quiet, private area away from food and water bowls.

DON'T

- Use scented litter. Perfumed smells tend to repel cats.
- Get a box that's too small; your cat needs space to turn around, dig, and cover.
- Leave waste sitting in the litter box; nobody likes a dirty bathroom.
- Use strong chemicals or disinfectants to clean the box.
- Use a litter box liner or a covered box.
- Place the litter box near anything noisy, like a washing machine, furnace, or toilet.
- Place the litter box in a high-traffic area in your home

Continue to next page

• • • • •

CHANGES IN THE HOME

RELOCATING

DIRTY LITTER BOX

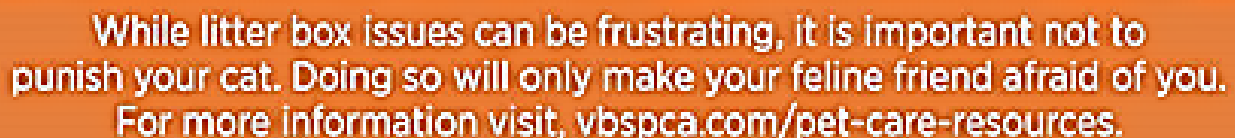
FEELING ANXIOUS

SOILED AREAS

PREFERENCE RELATED PROBLEMS

TERRITORIAL MARKING

Territory related issues can be complicated and require behavior modification, and it is best to start by consulting with your veterinarian.



How to Keep Your Adopted Pet Healthy



Socialize them

Socialization is the process of getting pets used to different situations and teaching them acceptable behaviors. Properly socialized pets are enjoyable pets and are less likely to injure other pets or people. Basic obedience training is very important for dogs and can make them better companions and reduce the risk of dog bite injuries.

Consider insuring them

Purchasing pet insurance to cover the costs of unexpected illness or injury is a personal choice and not a requirement. There are multiple options for pet insurance. If you choose to purchase insurance, evaluate all of your options and choose a plan that works best for you and your pet.

Special needs pets

“Special needs pets” are pets that have medical conditions that require long-term care and/or special management. Although their care can be more demanding, if you are willing to go the extra mile, they can make wonderful pets. If you’ve adopted a special needs pet, discuss your pet’s condition with your veterinarian so s/he can help you provide the best care for your pet and give it the best chances for a happier, longer life.

When you acquire a pet, you are making a promise to accept responsibility for the health and welfare of another living creature for its lifetime. You also agree to be responsible for your pet’s impact on your family, friends, and community. Choose your pet wisely, keep your promise, and enjoy one of life’s most rewarding experiences!

For more information, go to www.avma.org

Continue to next page

Congratulations on adopting your new pet!

Adopted dogs and cats can be wonderful companions for you and your family, not to mention the great feeling that comes with knowing you're giving your new pet another chance at a loving, long-term home. A big part of that second chance is providing for your new pet's health and welfare, and that's where your veterinarian comes in.

Get an early start

Take your new pet to the veterinarian right away to get it checked out and make sure it's healthy. It's also a great time to talk with your veterinarian about what you can do to keep your pet healthy with good preventive care – exercise, feeding, vaccinating, and preventing parasites are among the topics you should discuss with your veterinarian. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure – and in the case of medical care, preventing a disease is much cheaper than treating a pet that has a preventable (and potentially deadly) disease.

Tag them

One of the first things you should do is get ID tags for your new pet. Yes, even for a cat. Consider it an inexpensive investment that will help you get your pet back if you become separated. Many rescues and shelters implant pets with microchips, which is the best and most reliable way to make sure you're reunited with your lost pet. Keep in mind, though, that a microchip is only effective if the registration information is correct, so make sure you find out how to get your information into the microchip database and how to keep it updated.



Keep them healthy

Our pets are living longer, happier lives than ever before, and improvements in medical care for pets have played a big role in this trend. Keeping your pet healthy includes keeping it at an appropriate weight (not too fat, not too thin) and providing good preventive care. By working together, you and your veterinarian can give your new pet the best chance of a long, healthy and happy life.

Spay or neuter them

Please do your part to prevent unwanted litters by spaying or neutering your new pet if it hasn't already been done. Spaying and neutering can also make your pet less likely to roam and may reduce your pet's risk of certain cancers.

Vaccinate them

Vaccines protect pets from potentially deadly diseases. Talk to your veterinarian about what vaccines your pet needs. Some vaccines, such as rabies, are recommended for all pets, while other vaccines may or may not be necessary based on your pet's risk of exposure to the disease prevented by that vaccine.

Keep them parasite-free

Internal parasites, such as intestinal worms, can cause serious problems for pets. External parasites, such as fleas and ticks, can not only be a nuisance, but can carry diseases that can threaten the life of your pet. Dogs and cats can both become infested with heartworms, which can be deadly. Keeping your pet free of parasites is important for its health – and your family's health, too, because some of these parasites can cause or carry diseases that can affect people.

What is FIV?

What is FIV?

FIV stands for feline immunodeficiency virus. FIV typically causes a weakening of the cat's immune system. It is the same class of virus as HIV (a lentivirus); however, only cats can get FIV. People and dogs cannot.

How do cats get the feline immunodeficiency virus?

The most common route of infection is a deep bite wound from an FIV-positive cat to another cat. It can also be transmitted via blood, in utero and from the milk of an infected mother cat. It is very rare for cats to get FIV just from being around infected cats, sharing food bowls, or from a person touching an FIV-positive cat and then touching an FIV-negative cat. Many FIV-positive cats and FIV-negative cats live together in the same home for years without spreading the virus to the non-infected cats.

What are the signs of FIV infection?

There are no specific signs of FIV infection. FIV-positive cats have a weaker immune system, so they are more prone to getting infections, such as upper respiratory infections, ringworm and dental disease. Other than that, FIV-positive cats tend to live normal lives and have a normal length of life.

How do I know if my cat has the virus?

There are no obvious signs of FIV, so the only way to know is to do a blood test. The most common screening test is an ELISA test (often called a SNAP test) done by your veterinarian. This test looks for antibodies to FIV. An antibody is a protein made by the cat in response to FIV infection. A cat can test positive as early as two to four weeks after exposure, but in some cases it can take up to eight weeks. Kittens under six months of age may test falsely positive after having received antibodies from their mothers, either in utero or via milk. It can take up to six months for these antibodies to go away. Thus, it is a good idea to retest a kitten testing positive after reaching six months of age.

Can FIV be treated?

There are no proven treatments to rid a cat of FIV. Most FIV-positive cats handle the disease well, but it is important to concentrate on treating the secondary illnesses.

What can be done to prevent the spread of FIV?

Cats should be kept indoors, so they do not fight with an FIV-positive cat. Depending on where one lives, the rate of FIV-positive cats ranges from four to 24 percent. An FIV-positive cat can live with an FIV-negative cat as long as neither cat is a fighter, or if the FIV-positive cat has no teeth. (FIV-positive cats commonly have severe dental disease, which often means it is necessary to remove all their teeth.)

There is a vaccine for FIV, but some do not recommend it because the vaccine does not have the best efficacy and, after a cat is vaccinated for FIV, the cat will test positive for the virus. At this point, no test can differentiate whether a cat tests positive for FIV from the vaccine or from having the infection. In some areas, if a cat escapes and is picked up by local animal control and then tested, the cat may be killed because of a positive test.

Can FIV-negative and FIV-positive cats live together?

Yes, as long as the cats get along and do not fight. The risk of an FIV-positive cat spreading the virus to an FIV-negative cat can be minimized by putting both cats in separate rooms until you are confident that they will not fight with each other. Spaying or neutering your pets will also reduce any risk.

Can cats with the virus have a good and long life?

Yes, FIV-positive cats can live normal lives, both in quality and duration. They just need to be monitored for infections and dental issues. But if they're well cared for, they can be healthy, happy, wonderful pets.

Feline Panleukopenia

What is feline panleukopenia?

Feline panleukopenia (FP) is a highly contagious viral disease of cats caused by the feline parvovirus. Kittens are most severely affected by the virus. The names feline distemper and feline parvo should not be confused with canine distemper or canine parvo — although their names are similar, they are caused by different viruses. The viruses do not infect people.

The feline parvovirus infects and kills cells that are rapidly growing and dividing, such as those in the bone marrow, intestines, and the developing fetus.

Which cats are susceptible to FP?

Because the FP virus is everywhere in the environment, virtually all kittens and cats are exposed to the virus at some point in their lives. While cats of any age may be infected with the feline parvovirus that causes FP, young kittens, sick cats, and unvaccinated cats are most susceptible. It is most commonly seen in cats 3-5 months of age; death from FP is more common at this age.

The virus has appeared in all parts of the United States and most countries of the world. Kennels, pet shops, animal shelters, unvaccinated feral cat colonies, and other areas where groups of cats are housed together appear to be the main reservoirs of FP. During the warm months, urban areas are likely to see outbreaks of FP because cats are more likely to come in contact with other cats.

How do cats become infected?

Cats can shed the virus in their urine, stool, and nasal secretions; infection occurs when susceptible cats come in contact with these secretions, or even the fleas from infected cats. An infected cat tends to shed the virus for a relatively short period of time (1-2 days), but the virus can survive for up to a year in the environment, so cats may become infected without ever coming into direct contact with an infected cat.

Bedding, cages, food dishes, and the hands or clothing of people who handle the infected cat may harbor the virus and transmit it to other cats. It is, therefore, very important to isolate infected cats. Any materials used on or for infected cats should not be used or allowed to come in contact with other cats, and people handling infected cats should practice proper hygiene to prevent spreading the infection.

The virus that causes FP is difficult to destroy and resistant to many disinfectants. Ideally, unvaccinated cats should not be allowed into an area where an infected cat has been — even if the area has been disinfected.

How is FP diagnosed?

The signs of FP can vary and may be similar to other illnesses such as Salmonella or Campylobacter infection, pancreatitis, feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) infection, or feline leukemia virus (FeLV) infection. Infected cats may even show signs that resemble those seen when a cat has been poisoned or has swallowed a foreign object.

The FP virus causes damage to the cells that line the intestines. It also attacks the bone marrow and lymph nodes, resulting in shortages of all types of white blood cells (panleukopenia) and of red blood cells (anemia). The first visible signs an owner might notice include generalized depression, loss of appetite, high fever, lethargy, vomiting, severe diarrhea, nasal discharge, and dehydration. Sick cats may sit for long periods of time in front of their water bowls but not drink much water. In some cats, the fever will come and go during the illness and abruptly fall to lower-than-normal levels shortly before death. In young kittens, the virus can also damage the brain and the eyes.

Pregnant female cats that are infected with the virus and become ill (even if they do not appear seriously ill) may abort or give birth to kittens with severe damage to the cerebellum, a part of the brain that coordinates nerves, muscles and bones to produce body movements. These kittens are born with a syndrome called feline cerebellar ataxia, and their movement is accompanied by severe tremors (shaking).

Feline panleukopenia may be suspected based on a history of exposure to an infected cat, lack of vaccination, and the visible signs of illness. When that history of exposure is combined with blood tests that show severely reduced levels of all white blood cell types, FP is likely the cause of the cat's illness. FP is confirmed when the feline parvovirus is found in the cat's stool, but the results might be falsely positive if the cat was vaccinated for FP within 5-12 days prior to the test.

How is FP treated?

The likelihood of recovery from FP for infected kittens less than eight weeks old is poor. Older cats have a greater chance of survival if adequate treatment is provided early. Since there are no medications capable of killing the virus, intensive care and treatment are critical to support the cat's health with medications and fluids until its own body and immune system can fight off the virus. Without such supportive care, up to 90% of cats with FP may die.

Treatment focuses on correcting dehydration, providing nutrients, and preventing secondary infection. Although antibiotics do not kill the virus, they are often necessary because infected cats are at a higher risk of bacterial infections because their immune systems are not fully functioning (due to the decreased white blood cells) and because bacteria from the damaged gut may enter the cat's bloodstream and cause infection.

If the cat survives for five days, its chances for recovery are greatly improved. Strict isolation from other cats is necessary to prevent spread of the virus. Other cats that may have been in contact with the infected cat, or in contact with objects or people who were in close contact with the sick cat, should be carefully monitored for any visible signs of illness. In most cases, once a cat recovers from FP, it will not infect other cats through direct contact, but some recovered cats can shed the virus in their stool and urine for up to 6 weeks.

How can FP be prevented?

Cats that survive an infection develop immunity that likely protects them for the rest of their lives. Mild cases that go unnoticed will also produce immunity from future infection.

It is also possible for kittens to receive temporary immunity through the transfer of antibodies in the colostrum — the first milk produced by the mother. This is called "passive immunity," and how long it protects the kittens from infection depends upon the levels of protective antibodies produced by the mother. It rarely lasts longer than 12 weeks.

Remember, cats are curious by nature. Keep your cat safe from these common household hazards:

Plants

Many plants (such as plants of the lily family, onions, and garlic) are toxic to cats. Put your plants in areas your cat can't access. Alternatively, spray them with bitter apple to discourage your cat from eating them. Provide safe herbs such as catnip or alfalfa for your cat to chew on.

Poison

Human medications (especially aspirin, acetaminophen, and NSAIDs), veterinary medications, insecticides, rodenticides, household cleaners, chemicals, and paints can all cause severe injury or death to cats; so can chocolate. Secure all cupboards, closets, and cabinets—use childproof latches when possible.

Chemical rub-off

Use natural, nontoxic cleaners in your home. Cats are fastidious groomers and easily pick up chemical residue on their fur and paw pads from contact with harsh cleaning agents. Ammonia-based cleaners and phenol disinfectants are particularly dangerous.

Cords

Bundle up and hide any electrical wires or cords. Cats find them tempting to chew on, and they may try to pull out plugs.

Unsafe hiding places

Block access to dangerous places for cats, such as behind stoves, refrigerators, motors, washers, dryers, etc.

Strings

Cats love string games and are quick to pounce when they see an opportunity. But swallowed string can cause intestinal damage and may require expensive surgery to remove. Keep tinsel, thread, dental floss, rubber bands, cords from blinds, necklaces, dangly earrings, and anything similar out of your cat's reach as they can be fatal.

Bags

Cats love the way plastic bags sound and move; however, plastic bags are not safe for cats since they often try to chew on them or climb into them. Paper bags are a safer option, but make sure to cut off bag handles as cats can get caught in them.

Open windows/doors

Contrary to popular belief, most cats that fall from windows don't survive. Make certain all your windows are cat-proof (screens should be tight!) and can't be pushed open.

Balconies

Ensure that your cat does not have access to your balcony. Cats don't know how far they are off the ground, and if they see a bird or bug fly by, they will jump at it without hesitation. Avoid serious injuries by ensuring cats are not able to get outside to a balcony.

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



TOXIC & SAFE

HUMAN FOODS FOR PETS

Available 24/7
*Fees Apply

ASPCA Poison Control • Call (888) 426-4435*
Pet Poison Helpline • Call (855) 764-7661*
Animal Poison Hotline • Call (888) 232-8870*

Veterinarian Name/Number: _____

Emergency Vet Name/Number: _____



Food toxicity can range from mild discomfort to severe poisoning. Consult with your veterinarian if you think your pet ingested a toxic item.

MEATS & FISH

TOXIC

- Fatty/Junk Foods
- Fat Trimmings
- Fish & Poultry Bones
- Raw Meat
- Raw Fish
- Raw Eggs



SAFE

- Cooked Lean Beef, Lamb, Pork, Chicken or Turkey (unseasoned)
- Cooked Tuna or Salmon (unseasoned in moderation)
- Cooked Eggs
- Broth (low sodium)



NUTS, SWEETS & SPICES

TOXIC

- Salty Foods (in large amounts)
- Sugary Foods (in large amounts)
- Artificial Sweeteners: Aspartame or Xylitol (frequently found in sugar free candy, gum, peanut butter)
- Chocolate
- Nutmeg
- Nuts: Macadamia, Almonds, Walnuts, Pistachios, Pecans
- Seeds: Sunflower, Pumpkin, Fruit
- Gum
- Candy

SAFE

- Honey (in small amounts)
- Peanut Butter (with real sugar)
- Oils: Olive, Coconut, Flax (in small amounts)

FRUITS

TOXIC

- Avocado
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Currants
- Rhubarb
- Grapefruit
- Citrus Rinds (Skin)
- Fruit Pits: Apricots, Peaches, Plums, Cherries, Nectarines



SAFE

- Apples
- Bananas
- Melons: Cantaloupe, Honey Dew, Watermelon
- Kiwi
- Fruit only-no Pits: Mangoes, Apricots, Peaches, Plums, Nectarines
- Pumpkin
- Pineapple
- Pears
- Berries: Strawberries, Blueberries, Blackberries, Raspberries
- Citrus: Oranges, Clementines, Tangerines, Lemons (no rinds)

STARCHES & GRAINS

TOXIC

- Yeast Dough
- Moldy Bread or Food
- Homemade Play or Salt Dough
- Potato Skins/Raw Potatoes
- Popcorn kernels (choking hazard)



SAFE

- Potatoes/Sweet Potatoes (cooked with skin removed)
- Rice (in small amounts)
- Grains: Oatmeal, Polenta (cooked)
- Whole Grain Bread (small amounts)
- Popcorn (air popped plain)

VEGETABLES

TOXIC

- Garlic
- Onions
- Chives
- Leeks
- Mushrooms
- Tomatoes



SAFE

- Green Beans
- Carrots
- Celery
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cooked Zucchini/Squash
- Peas

DAIRY

TOXIC

- Milk, Cream, 1/2 & 1/2
- Butter, Butter Spread
- Ice Cream, Whipped Cream



SAFE

- Cheese (in small amounts)
- Cottage Cheese (in small amounts)
- Greek Yogurt (plain, low fat)

DRINKS



TOXIC

- Alcohol (Beer, Wine, Liquor)
- Caffeine (Energy Drinks, Coffee & Tea)

SAFE

- Water
- Coconut water (unsweetened)

Keep them safe. Keep them protected. • TLC Safety By Design® • TLCsafetybydesign.com