

Cat

Felis domesticus



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Worshipped as gods, hunted as companions to witches, cats have fascinated us throughout time. Still somewhat mysterious (science still can't explain how a cat purrs), cats have recently surpassed dogs as the most popular pet in America.



Is a cat the right companion animal for you?

| Yes | No |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have an appropriate indoor location and space for a cat.
- I will have my cat spayed or neutered.
- I understand that cats that roam outdoors are more at risk for injury, diseases and accidental death than cats that are kept indoors.
- I can commit to providing proper attention, nutrition and veterinary care, including vaccinations, for this cat.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this cat.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a cat may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a cat and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Before deciding to purchase a cat, consider adoption!
Your local PETCO will be able to provide you with additional information.

Average Size 8 to 13lbs **Life Span** 11 to 13+ years, with proper care

Diet Carnivorous.; most will do very well on any of today's premium cat foods. Match food to life stage and activity level. Cats, especially males, need premium foods to avoid urinary tract blockages

Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake

Fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily

Feeding Feed 2-3 small meals daily; watch cat for signs of boredom; bored cats will seriously over eat if food is always available

Housing Cats should be kept indoors for their safety and the safety of wild animals, especially song birds

Always have a separate litter box for each cat, with at least one litter box on each level of the cat's home

Grooming and Hygiene Self-grooming and naturally clean. Occasional bathing may be needed. Medium and long-hair cats will need daily brushing and occasional treats of hairball preventative. Many PETCOs offer professional grooming services

Trim claws as needed

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Recommended Supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Premium cat food | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter box and liners | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming supplies |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Food dish | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter and scoop | <input type="checkbox"/> Scratching post |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys | <input type="checkbox"/> Book on cat care |

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Common Myths **Myth: A female cat should only be spayed after her first heat or first litter.** Spay a female cat as early as possible, usually between 6 and 8 months of age; allowing a queen (female cat) to have one litter first provides no benefit and helps contribute to pet overpopulation

Myth: Cats are aloof, independent, and not very time-consuming. Cats may act aloof at times, and are definitely more independent than the average dog, but they still require frequent and consistent interaction and acceptance to feel secure

Myth: Putting a bell on my cat will prevent it from catching birds and small animals. Cats can learn to move silently even while wearing a bell; the constant jangle of the bell can be quite irritating to a cat's super-sharp hearing.

Myth: Declawing is a simple procedure. Declawing a cat removes the entire first joint of the cat's toe. Talk carefully with your vet about surgical and non-surgical options before deciding to declaw your cat

Normal Behavior and Interaction Playful, especially as kittens; need daily interaction with loving owner to feel secure; rubbing head or body against object or owner is a way of "scent-marking" and saying "This is mine!"
Growling, hissing or spitting is a sign of fear or frustration; purring, short meows and squeaks generally show contentment and affection
Scratching or "sharpening claws" is a natural and necessary behavior. Save furniture by always providing proper sized scratching posts

- Signs of a Healthy Animal**
- Active and responsive
 - Clean fur
 - Clear eyes and nose
 - Even gait
 - Clear, unlabored breathing
 - Eats and drinks regularly

Common Health Issues

| Health Issue (alpha) | Symptoms or Causes | Suggested Action |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Diarrhea | Loose stools caused by poor diet, stress, unclean housing, or other illness | Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment. Keep vaccinations current |
| Hairballs | Coughing, hacking or vomiting | Regular use of hairball preventative. Contact a veterinarian if persistent or losing weight |
| Mites, fleas, ticks | External parasites; cause itching, loss of hair, certain diseases | Use products especially for cats. Contact a veterinarian for treatment |

- Red Flags**
- Missing fur
 - Distressed breathing
 - Lethargic
 - Diarrhea, vomiting
 - Eye or nasal discharge
 - Excessive thirst
 - Uneven gait
 - Weight loss
 - Coughing, hacking

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.

Sources *The New Guide to Cat Care* by Alan Edwards
The 125 Most Asked Questions About Cats by John Malone
Choosing the Perfect Cat by Dennis Kelsey-Woods

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.