



Starting Out on the Right Paw With Your Newly Adopted Cat!

Congratulations on adopting a new member of your household! To help your new feline friend adapt to your home, we recommend you follow the following guidelines:

PLEASE KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON YOUR CAT NEAR ANY EXITS (DOORS, OPEN WINDOWS, ETC.), AND ALWAYS IN A CARRIER WHEN TRAVELING. CATS ARE VERY LIKEY TO RUN AWAY FROM HOME WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK IN A NEW PLACE.

- 1. KEEP YOUR CAT CONFINED TO A QUIET, SMALL ROOM INSIDE YOUR HOME FOR THE FIRST 7 TO 14 DAYS.** Place a clean litter box, food, water, sleeping blanket or bed, a scratching post and a few toys in this confinement room. Good places to use are a small bedroom or a bathroom. This gives your cat a chance to adjust to the smells and sounds of your home without being overwhelmed. This also helps your cat to remember to use the litter box, because he/she can see where it is. Once your cat is confident in his/her room, allow him/her gradual access to the rest of your home.
- 2. SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE IN YOUR CAT'S ROOM AND ALLOW HIM/HER TO HIDE.** Spend some time reading, or doing paperwork in the room where your cat is staying. Do not force your cat to come to you or sit in your lap. Let your cat make the first move. If you force your cat to come out from hiding, you may get bitten or scratched! It is not uncommon for shy cats to remain hiding for the first week before they seek interaction. Check the food dish to make sure he/she is eating, and the litter box to make sure it is being used. When your cat is comfortable he/she will come out and initiate contact with you!
- 3. PROVIDE PLENTY OF EXERCISE.** Once your cat is feeling relaxed, make sure you play with him/her! Cats want to be more active at night, so if you play with them during the day, they will let you sleep. Cats should get two exercise periods per day to learn to play with their own toys, and not feet or clothes. Make sure to use toys appropriately, wand toys for chase play, and mousey toys for self-entertainment play. You do not want to teach your cat to play with your hands or feet, biting can hurt, and your friends and family might not find it as endearing as you do!
- 4. CLEAN THE LITTER BOX DAILY.** Many cats stop using their litter box if it does not get cleaned. Nobody wants to use a dirty toilet! If you have multiple cats in the home, you will need to get one litter box per cat, plus an extra one.
- 5. IF YOU PLAN ON LETTING YOUR CAT HAVE INDOOR/OUTDOOR ACCESS, DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CAT OUTSIDE FOR THE FIRST 90 DAYS.** HSSV highly recommends keeping your cat indoors only. Cats are safer, and healthier while kept indoors only, therefore they live longer. It helps to reduce the spread of FIV, and cats going missing from being trapped as supposed strays. If you do plan on giving your cat outdoor access, wait 90 days before allowing the first steps outside. This will ensure your cat has a good idea of his/her surroundings and less of a chance of getting lost. The first few expeditions outdoors should be closely supervised and should only be short periods. If you would like to learn more about the benefit of an indoor cat, ask your adoption counselor!

FELINE HEALTH INFORMATION

Transition into a new home is very stressful for kitties. Stress can cause severe immune system compromise. For this reason, we highly recommend that you schedule a physical exam with your vet within the first two weeks of taking your kitty home.

While at HSSV, your kitty has received all necessary vaccines appropriate for their age. Depending on how long your kitty was in our care, they still may require boosters to be fully protected from the diseases of concern. By California law, kittens who were adopted at younger than 3 months of age will require a rabies vaccination when they reach 3 months. Felines adopted from HSSV should have received:

- Routine deworming to rid them of potential roundworm infection. Along with any other treatment required for any other parasites if any were found.
- Flea control treatment
- FeLV and/or FeLV/FIV testing
- Spay or neuter surgery
- Microchip, along with a lifetime registration through HomeAgain

We strive to provide the best health care within our power and resources, although we hope you understand that because we are a non-profit organization, we may not have the resources to preform every test necessary to obtain a complete medical diagnosis. Animals who require specific veterinary treatments have received the best care we can provide to control any health conditions during their stay here, and we will provide as much information as we can to aid our adopters in providing excellent health care for their new kitty in the future. Although some of the pet adopted from HSSV may not have exhibited signs of health problems while they were here, you and your vet may discover a new health problem after the adoption. It is the responsibility of the new family to provide veterinary care for any health concerns that were not present at the time of adoption.

Common health concerns that may not be present at the time of adoption but that may arise after the kitty starts transitioning into the home are:

- Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) – Just like with people, when a feline's body is under stress, their immune system can become compromised. The most common cause of URI is viral, which requires the kitty's immune system to resolve. Signs of uncomplicated URI include sneezing with clear nasal discharge, with or without decreased appetite and/or activity. Often, kitties will develop secondary bacterial infections which may require antibiotics to prevent progression to pneumonia. Indications of secondary bacterial infection include yellow or green nasal discharge. Your kitty may have conjunctivitis as part of the URI complex and this may require topical treatment to prevent damage to their eye. Once your kitty gets over their bout of URI, is fully settled into their new home, and their immune system is no longer comprised by stress, they are unlikely to develop URI again. If their immune system becomes compromised again due to moving, or new additions to the family or household, (anything that could cause stress) they are likely to develop URI again. Think of a human cold! Though URI is not contagious to humans, it is to other cats. So if your kitty develops a stuffy nose, keep them away from other kitty family members!

- Diarrhea – This is usually due to a combination of diet change and stress of transition. While at HSSV kitties are fed Royal Canin Dry food and California Natural wet food. They are fed twice a day. Very young kittens (6 months and under) have dry food available at all times. Some kitties who have special dietary requirements receive prescription foods, and your adoption counselor will inform you of what they have been eating. Changes in type of food, time of feeding, or even location of feeding may play a role in causing a change of stool quality. For most kitties, they just need time to adjust to their new homes to settle their tummies. Though some may have diarrhea because of intestinal parasites. While we routinely deworm for roundworms, there are several other types of parasites kitties can get infected with. If we had received a fecal exam result, and it was negative, there is still a possibility that your kitty may be infected. We recommend doing a second fecal exam with your vet to verify that the parasite eggs were not missed with the first exam. Always wash your hands after cleaning each litter box to reduce the chance of spreading any parasites!

Our medical clinic can provide vaccination services for the rest of your kitty's life. But you will need to establish a relationship with your own vet to provide full health care, annual check-ups, and any urgent medical needs. View the attached handout to see the Veterinary Offices HSSV recommends!