

Shopping List for a New Cat or Kitten

Food:

Adult cats at the shelter are used to having *Science Diet Feline Adult Optimal Care* dry food available at all times (we feed them a specific amount per day according to their current weight). Kittens have *Science Diet Kitten Healthy Development* dry food available at all times. In addition, we give a spoonful of canned food (any brand) morning and evening to stimulate their appetites. These foods are available for purchase at the shelter retail store, and other pet supply stores.

To switch to another brand, mix in the new food in a 1 part to 3 parts ratio for a few days, then go to half and half, 3 parts to one, and complete the switch over 10-14 days. We recommend continuing with the canned food through the transitional period of 2-3 weeks, for adult cats, and 4-6 weeks for kittens.

Kittens should be fed a high-quality kitten formula dry food until they reach 1 year of age. Adult cats and juvenile kittens may have a difficult time transitioning into their new diet. To support proper feeding habits if the cat or kitten is not eating, we would suggest warm wet food, baby food or a splash of kitten milk replacement on top of wet food. Cats and kittens are drawn to smelly foods such as tuna and baby food. Do **not** feed cow's milk to your cat or kitten! **If you notice your new kitten or cat has stopped eating, it is recommended to seek veterinary care immediately.**

Equipment:

Collar and ID Tag: Absolute Necessities! It is highly recommended to use a breakaway or safety collar for your cat. Because of the acrobatic nature of cats, they can get caught by their collars on branches, etc, and a safety collar will break away to prevent injury. It is always a good idea to have the cat's name and your name and phone number on the ID tag so that if your cat gets lost they can be easily returned. The rabies, microchip, and license tags are also a good addition to consider.

Food and Water Dishes: Each cat should have her own food dish, preferably of stainless steel or ceramic.

Litter Box & Scoop: The rule of thumb for multiple cats is: 1 box per cat, +1 box. Boxes come in various sizes; some have hoods, some have rims; there are even some fancy self-cleaning jobs. Most important is that the box be large enough for your cat. We also recommend that you initially avoid using a covered litter box or pan liners (unless specifically recommended for your cat) as they can discourage proper litter box usage at first. You should also avoid placing litter boxes near washing machines or in other areas where there may be loud, random noises that could frighten your cat, possibly causing them to avoid that area.

Litter: We primarily use non-clumping pine pellet litter here in the shelter. We recommend continuing to use this at home, unless otherwise recommended for your cat, or do a slow transition over to the new litter to ensure consistent litter box habits. "Clumping" type litter, with texture similar to sand, seems to be accepted by most cats. It does make box cleaning easier, though you may want to use a rug under the box to catch grains that cling to paws. Daily paw checks should be

done when using clumping litter to ensure that clumps are not accumulating. Cats definitely prefer unscented litter! Scoop every day, or the clumps will break down and release odor.

Scratching Post: Cats need to exercise their feet, legs, neck, and shoulders by scratching, so a large, sturdy post is best. Many have perches or beds built in. The best ones combine several textures, such as sisal rope, jute, or burlap, on the scratching surface. Cats may have different preferences of position (vertical vs horizontal) and texture, so you should play around with this to find the right scratching surface for your cat. We also recommend against carpet on the scratching post as it may encourage the cats to begin scratching your carpet.

Grooming: Nail clippers, either made for cats or human toenail clippers, are recommended for the weekly pedicure to keep those nails short and healthy! A soft bristle brush, a "slicker" type, for pulling out dead undercoat, and a steel comb for medium or longhaired cats will keep your pet groomed. Depending on the length of fur, cats should be brushed weekly (longhair) or biweekly (short hair). This will vary depending on the individual cat's needs as well. A larger cat who can't reach to groom his back should get a daily brushing to prevent oil build up and matting.

Bed: Most cats appreciate a snug nest (or 2 or 3...) in which to curl up and relax. This is a necessity if you don't plan to allow your cat onto the furniture! Windowsill nap ledges are especially appreciated by indoor cats! Cardboard boxes with a blanket are also a favorite! They tend to like deep set bedding that they can feel nestled and secure in.

Toys:

Interactive toys: Cat Dancer, "fishing poles" with various objects on a string, light toys (laser pointers or flashlights), and homemade variants, are toys you use to play with your cat. Good for giving a kitten a workout to encourage sleeping through the night, or getting an older cat to get enough exercise; they also help break the ice with new cats!

Other toys: A variety of toys will allow you to rotate them to keep the cat intrigued when they are on their own. Balls, squeak toys, stuffed animals, kitty mazes, and many more will appeal to your cat's changing moods. An indoor cat can't have too many toys! Many of these supplies can be purchased at our retail store here at the shelter. Other options include bird feeders outside of windows and/or the nature channel playing on your T.V. These can help keep a cat entertained while you are at work meaning they are less likely to bombard your legs when you arrive home!