

CATegorical Care:

AN OWNER'S
GUIDE TO

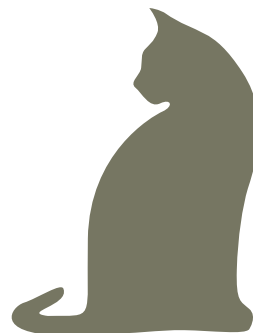
America's #1 Companion



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This document is approved by the American Humane Association, CATalyst Council, Society of Animal Welfare Administrators and Winn Feline Foundation.



*Dedicated to the memory of James Richards, DVM, Cornell Feline Health Center
A friend to all cats*

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Introduction

Dear Cat Lover,

A soft, rhythmic purr. The gentle touch of a paw. An amusing acrobatic antic. These are just a few of the ways cats enrich our lives.

Cats are intelligent and sophisticated, and they're athletic and playful. In a word, cats are COOL! And whether you currently have cats, have lived with cats in the past or are bringing home your first feline, you already know how much they make you smile — cats are just plain fun!

CATegorical Care: An Owner's Guide to America's #1 Companion tells you what's important for your cat's care and will provide a handy reference for your cat's needs for many years to come.

Right now, the most important thing is to enjoy your new furry friend, and get set to have some fantastic feline FUN!

*Jane Brunt, DVM
Executive Director
CATalyst Council*

CATegorical Care: An Owner's Guide to America's #1 Companion

Welcome to *CATegorical Care: An Owner's Guide to America's #1 Companion*. A whole lot of people love and cherish cats; in fact, pet cats are the most popular companion animal in the United States, outnumbering dogs by some 15 million. So what a surprise: It seems that cats must be man's best friend!

These days, the vast majority of pet owners — cat owners included — consider pets to be members of their families and naturally want the best for their pets. Good nutrition, proper veterinary care and savvy cat owners all help to explain why our cats are living longer, healthier lives than ever before.

Yet despite the increasing popularity of cats, there are other sides to the story that are cause for concern. Shelters nationwide are brimming with cats, especially during the spring and summer “kitten season.” In addition, many cats end up in shelters because their owners believe cats are disposable and simply put them out on the street to fend for themselves if they can no longer care for them. Tragically, only one in four shelter cats ever finds a home.

There is also a decline in how often cats see a veterinarian, especially compared to dogs. In fact, cats — on average — see a veterinarian less than half as often as dogs. One problem is that when cats are sick, they may act in ways that owners don't recognize as sickness, such as becoming finicky about food or missing their litter box. As a result, cats could be cheating themselves out of receiving the care they need. Another major problem is getting the cat to the veterinarian. For dogs, it's usually a matter of opening the car door and saying, “Let's go.” For cats, the technique is a little different (and for some cat owners, more difficult).

The CATalyst Council is a nonprofit organization composed of animal health and welfare organizations and corporations that have identified the need for change in the way cats are valued and cared for. *CATegorical Care* is written specifically for owners who, in partnership with their veterinarian, want to ensure the best possible welfare and health throughout their pets' lives. It is also intended to encourage people who've never before experienced the gentle touch of a feline friend to give it a whirl. Once you live with a cat, you'll realize there are lots of misconceptions about them. Cats, when given a chance, are their best self-promoters. What's more, living with a purr-machine can be beneficial to your health.

Owners know that cats are individuals with needs that change from infant to juvenile, adult to geriatric. Specific age groups in cats are not well-defined because individual cats age at different rates, so the age CATegories used in this guide are not absolutes. Instead, they highlight the physical and behavioral changes that may occur at different times in your cat's life. This information will help you understand what your cat wants and needs in many CATegories of health and welfare.

Here Kitty, Kitty: Where to Find a Cat

Without question, adopting a cat from an animal shelter is a wonderful option. There are more kinds of cats to choose from at shelters than there are kinds of toasters! However, unlike toasters, you're embracing a living, breathing family member that will be with you for many years. A new cat isn't quite as much work as a dog, but cats are still every bit the same amount of responsibility.

Many people prefer a certain feline look, from tabby to tortoiseshell, and that's understandable. However, what's most important is to hook up with a cat whose personality is most likely to mesh with yours. For example, a more active, fun-loving cat might be a good fit for children, while a more peaceful cat may be perfect for an older person. Shelter adoption counselors can serve as matchmakers.

Also, think outside your own preconceived box. Kittens are certainly great fun, but they can be super energetic. Consider the benefits of adopting a middle-age or older cat; you'll have a self-starter with little training involved, and mature cats are sometimes overlooked at shelters.

If you already own a dog, but getting a second canine companion isn't practical, consider adopting a cat. The truth is that dogs are often cat-friendly, and adopting a pal with a purr for your pooch might be a great idea, particularly if you live in an apartment or smaller home.

Two cats are indeed better than one, and adopting a threesome might even work if you're dedicated to their care and are willing to receive three times the love. If you take home more than one, you may be keeping together littermates, lifelong companions or even cats who have become pals in the shelter. Most cats, particularly kittens, flourish with a friend.

The bottom line is that by adopting a cat, you may be saving a life. Many animals find themselves in a shelter through no fault of their own (for example, their owners die, move or simply change their minds about owning a pet).

Often cats adopt us. Perhaps a community (feral) cat that is friendly enough to bring indoors, or a formerly owned cat that decides you might offer the best home on the planet, chooses you. Feel honored.

If you already have cats, don't introduce a newcomer until you visit your veterinarian to have the new cat checked for infectious diseases (feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency viruses), the ringworm fungus, internal and external parasites, and general health. The new cat may seem fine, but an exam and testing is essential. Besides, your resident cats would likely be offended by an instant meeting. The more gradually cats are introduced to the new kits on the block, the better.

Pedigreed cats, from Abyssinians to Turkish Vans, are the cat world's best-kept secret. Pedigreed cats are bred for their stunning looks, as well as for personality. Each breed has a distinct demeanor, just as each dog breed has its own characteristics. It's important to do your homework and make sure the breed you want is right for you. Then check out the breeder. For starters, make sure the breeder is associated with the Cat Fanciers' Association and/or The International Cat Association.

Spay/Neuter, Please

Sterilizing (spaying females, neutering males) prevents the birth of unwanted kittens. Cats can literally breed like rabbits, producing two litters a year, and kittens can become pregnant as early as 4 or 5 months old. Spay/neuter also offers health advantages to adult cats. Females that are not neutered are prone to uterine infections and mammary cancer, and display unwelcome behaviors when they're in heat.

Unneutered male cats often fight one another, and bite wounds are common. Intact males will do anything they can to seek out females, and it might be a challenge to keep them inside. These boys famously vocalize in the wee hours and spray urine, marking their territory to advertise their availability to other cats.



The American Veterinary Medical Association supports the concept of pediatric spay/neuter in dogs as well as cats in an effort to reduce the number of unwanted animals. Just as for other veterinary medical and surgical procedures, veterinarians should use their best medical judgment in deciding at what age spay/neuter should be done on individual animals. Many shelters and veterinary practices spay/neuter as early as 8 weeks.

One advantage of adopting from shelters is that the cats have almost always been spayed or neutered already. Also, many communities offer subsidized spay/neuter programs that provide no- or low-cost sterilizations to pet owners.

Kitten Socialization Classes

Kitty kindergarten classes are a wonderful opportunity for kittens to be socialized to other cats, people and new experiences. Typically, they're offered for kittens from 8 to 15 or 16 weeks old. Kitten socialization classes are often held over two days for an hour each day, or on one day only for 90 minutes. Avoid any kitten class that doesn't mandate a veterinary medical release to ensure all the attending kittens are healthy.



If you want to take your cat out into the world with you later in life, for many kittens, these classes offer the socialization required for such adventures. In kitty kindergarten, you'll be introduced to the concept of leash and harness training. Class members play "pass the kitten," gently passing each kitten around the room — a great technique for acclimating kittens to a variety of strangers. Dogs are also introduced, and kittens can romp with one another. These classes may be held at a veterinary clinic, so kittens learn that a white lab coat and exam table aren't so bad after all. You'll also learn about basic lifetime care, including brushing teeth, clipping nails and brushing your cat's coat.

In addition to being fun for all the attendees, these classes give kittens a leg up on learning to cope with change. And while you're there, expert instructors (rather than possibly not-so-credible sources on the internet) can answer your cat questions.

Kitty Clicker College

You may not believe it, but cats can be trained to do pretty much anything a dog can do — and sometimes to do it better! Although training cats is a bit different than training dogs, positive reinforcement is the best training method for both. Figure out what motivates your cat. We work for money, and your cat should be paid, too — with what matters to her. Usually that's a special treat, or sometimes it's play or being stroked.

Cats are most easily trained using clicker training, a technique that relies on the behavioral science of operant conditioning. Begin by repeatedly clicking the clicker and offering your cat a small amount of a very special treat each time she hears the click sound. Repeat many times so your cat understands that the sound of the clicker is paired with a wonderful outcome.

Now that your cat knows what the sound of the clicker means, you can begin to shape a behavior. Use a treat to lure the cat into the position you want. For example, with the cat's back up against a wall, hold a treat over the cat's head but not so high that the cat will jump for it. Slowly move the treat back over the head as you say "sit." As the cat's head goes up, the rear end goes down. The instant



it does, click. Then give your cat the treat. The click marks the exact moment the cat did what you wanted. Congratulations, you've just taught your cat to sit! Of course, you'll have to repeat this, but motivated cats learn surprisingly fast.

Teaching a cat to come when called may be a lifesaver in an emergency, if you need to get yourself and your cat out of the house. Training is also great brain exercise, and learning keeps busy kittens and cats focused on what you want them to do. While in some ways kittens are easier to teach, cats of any age can be clicker trained. Keep the clicker classes short — just a couple of minutes or until your cat's attention starts to wander. Try to end each session with a success.

Lifestyle Choices

While life outdoors is more unpredictable and therefore (some might argue) more interesting for cats, it is also clearly more dangerous. Outdoors cats are at risk. Cars are at the top of the danger list. Some people think cats are so cunning that they don't get hit by cars; unfortunately, that's not true. Other risks include predators such as birds of prey, coyotes, rattlesnakes, free-roaming dogs and even alligators, depending on where you live. Cats can get into fights with other cats or wildlife and may become injured. Cats can spread diseases to one another. Outdoor cats lap up toxic antifreeze, nibble on dangerous plants, and walk through gardens and across lawns freshly treated with pesticides or fertilizer and then ingest it as they groom themselves.

Letting your cat roam is also irresponsible. Roaming cats might use the neighbor's garden as a litter box, and their mere presence outside another house can wreak havoc among indoor cats inside that house. Outside cats may kill songbirds and small rodents. Drivers have lost their lives behind the wheel attempting to avoid hitting a cat in the road.

However, there are ways to let your cats safely enjoy the sights and smells of outdoors. Cat fencing that is secured in the ground and curves inward on top will keep the cat inside your yard (adult supervision is also suggested). You can purchase an outdoor cat playground or build a play area. Cats can be taken for walks on a harness and leash or ride in luxury inside a cat stroller. While these experiences are wonderfully enriching and fun for many cats, keep in mind that some cats may be terrified of them.

Of course, cats enjoying bursts of fun outside must have monthly flea and heartworm prevention, and in some places, tick control. Talk to your veterinarian for advice.

Litter Box 101

Here are some tips for setting up that all-important litter box and making it the place your cat wants to go:

- Provide a type of litter that your cat loves, preferably unscented. There are many litter choices, but most cats prefer clumping clay litter. To figure out your cat's litter preference, offer different options in various litter boxes and retain the one that gets used the most.
- Scoop at least once a day — twice is better. Cats don't appreciate dirty toilets. At least once a month (or weekly if it's not a clumping-type litter), dump all the litter and wash the entire box with soap and water.
- Even if you have just one cat, you might need two boxes. Ideally, there should be one more box per household than the number of cats.
- It may be best to skip a litter box liner, as some cats don't like the feel of the plastic and sharp cat claws can puncture the liner. Also, liners have a tendency to hinder box scooping with clumping litters.
- While some cats prefer covered litter boxes, most do not.
- Location matters. For example, litter boxes downstairs might be a problem for older cats. Litter boxes near a loud appliance might be scary. Ideally, litter boxes should offer cats a view of what's going on as they do their business, yet still provide some seclusion. Litter boxes should not be placed where children play, as there can be too much commotion for some cats. And when possible, keeping dogs away from the box is a good idea.
- Supersize the boxes. Big and overweight cats just don't have enough elbow room in many of today's boxes. Try a plastic storage container instead (the kind used to store sweaters under the bed). If the cat is standing in the box but the urine ends up outside, try a plastic storage box with high sides. Just remember to cut out an opening (that isn't sharp) so the cat can easily get in and out.

Anxiety can play a role in cats missing the box. More than anything else, cats dislike change. The death of a pet, the addition of a new pet or the owners going away on vacation can prompt a cat to miss the box. Give the offender a chance to blow off that stress by offering more interactive play and providing environmental enrichment (see "Enriching Indoor Environments"). Another cause for anxiety may be the relationships in multi-pet homes. Cats can be surprisingly subtle about their disagreements. You may not see any overt catfights, but one cat may still be subtly preventing another from using the box in peace.

Enriching Indoor Environments

It's generally good news that more and more cats are being kept indoors. But while day-to-day life indoors is far more predictable and safe than living outside, indoor life can become monotonous. The lack of stimulation can result in boredom and even anxiety and illness (such as idiopathic cystitis, a painful disease and a major cause of litter box mistakes). Bored cats may create their own entertainment, getting into trouble nibbling on dangerous plants or climbing the blinds. Without mental and physical exercise, cats become "brain dead," fat and more prone to a long list of diseases.

Cats are happiest being cats — having opportunities to pounce and "hunt," even if they're indoors. The following are a few ideas to enrich your cat's indoor environment. *Keep in mind that all cats play differently, and if a cat begins to chew or shred any toy, you should remove that toy since it could be dangerous if swallowed.*

- An empty box can create a week's worth of fun. Leave out an empty box on Monday. On Tuesday, place the box upside down, put something on top to weigh it down and cut "mouse holes" in the sides; cats can reach inside for treats you've hidden. On Wednesday, turn the box right-side up and sprinkle catnip inside. On Thursday, relocate the box to another room, and it becomes new all over again. On Friday, place a small ball or squeaky mouse toy inside the box.
- Drop a ping-pong ball in an empty tissue box. Other free toys include paper bags and the plastic tops from milk jugs.
- Provide elevated spaces such as window ledges, cleared bookshelves, cat trees or a wooden painter's ladder. If you are very ambitious, build catwalks. In multi-cat homes, the more raised surfaces for individual cats to call their own, the less conflict you'll have.
- Outdoor bird feeders are entertaining for people and cats. Some cats will watch high-definition TV or DVDs starring birds and reptiles that are made just for cats.
- Rotate toys. From the cat's point of view, those stale mice toys have already been killed. Put them in a drawer and bring them out again in a few weeks.
- Laser pointers are great cat toys. Just make sure you never point the light into your cat's eyes (and have adult supervision so children don't point the light into their own eyes). Drop a treat or piece of kibble on the "little red bug" periodically throughout the game and at the conclusion of play so the cat really does get to "kill" something.
- Check out the cat toy aisle at pet stores; there are more great options than ever in the way of fun, stimulating toys.
- Feed your cats small portions of their food and treats (though not too many) at random times throughout the day and in various places around the house. Inexpensive food-dispensing toys are readily available. This strategy seems to be fun for most cats, allowing their prey drive to kick in; when they awake from their catnaps, they can "hunt" for a snack.
- Although introducing a new cat to other cats in your home requires patience and can be tricky, it usually works if you do it slowly and carefully. No special process is required if you adopt two cats that know one another from a shelter. As for dogs, it's a fallacy that cats and dogs don't get along. After all, about a quarter of all cats in America live with a dog. When introducing a dog, keep the pup on a leash to ensure safety and give the cat a sense of security. Also, cats require escape routes (easy ones are up high where the dog can't get a leg up). Dogs do best if they follow this simple rule: *Cat's rule!*



Play for Prey Is the Name of the Game

Cats may have become more popular than dogs partly because they are thought to be more independent. And while they can take care of a lot of things themselves, they still require attention, affection and interactive play.

Cats were born to chase, pounce and capture — but no toy that you leave lying on the floor or dangling from a doorknob is as interesting as a toy that you make move in unpredictable ways. That's why interactive toys, such as fishing pole-type toys with feathers or fabric at the end, are great. Some cats even enjoy a good game of fetch!

Play is good exercise and an appropriate emotional outlet, and it focuses the prey drive away from human fingers (never use your hands as a play object). Play enhances the human-animal bond, too. Play sessions don't need to be long, but they do need to take place daily. Just remember to gradually wind down the play session at the end, so you don't leave kitty all keyed up. Then comes the best part of all — your purr-machine snuggling in your lap!



Scratching the Surface: Think Twice Before You Declaw

Cats are authors; they write. But they don't communicate with a pen or computer keyboard; their prose is cat scratch — literally. They scratch to express excitement and pleasure. They scratch to leave messages, both visual and aromatic (cats' paws have scent glands). Cats also scratch to remove the worn-out sheaths from their claws and to stretch their muscles and spine. And scratching, by all accounts, seems to be fun. Scratching in the "wrong" places can be even more fun because some cats learn this gets a big reaction from their people, which they may find surprisingly rewarding.

It's important to understand that cats *must scratch*. It's a normal, important feline behavior. It's *where* they leave their marks that may be a problem.

The decision to declaw is yours, but please understand the facts before doing so. A cat's toe has three bones, and the claw grows from the end of the last bone. In a declaw surgery, the veterinarian amputates the last bone, which contains the growth plate for the claws. Put simply, declaw surgery is an amputation.



Modern veterinary medicine can provide adequate pain relief and accomplish a successful surgery. But do you really need to declaw your cat?

Kittens can be easily taught to scratch in all the "right" places, since you're working with a clean slate. Even cats accustomed to borrowing furniture as a scratcher can be retrained. All you need to do is simultaneously discourage your cat from scratching inappropriate objects while you encourage scratching on scratching posts.

Discourage the cat by using double-sided tape or a manufactured product that presents a sticky surface on areas that you don't want scratched (cats don't like sticky stuff on their paws). For large areas or objects like sofas, you can drape carpet runners or car mats (nubby side up) over them.

Encourage the cat to scratch in an appropriate place by purchasing a sturdy (so it doesn't topple over) vertical post scratcher, tall enough so the cat can stand on her back legs and reach up for a good stretch (at least 3 feet). Cats generally like materials they can really stick those claws into, and while every cat is different, sisal seems to be the most popular surface for a scratching post.

It's ideal to have a post in each of the rooms the family spends the most time in, and not hidden off in a corner. After all, the cat is trying to leave a message for others to see and smell. There's no hard and fast rule about how many posts you need, but more is better. If the cat is currently scratching an object you don't want scratched, place a post nearby. Entice the cat to paw at it by using an interactive toy and rubbing catnip on the post. When the cat deposits scent from her paws on the new scratching post, you're on your way.

Cats are marvelous observational learners, and some people report success by simply showing the cat what to do: Make believe you're a cat and scratch the post. Of course, you can also clicker train your cat to scratch at the post (see "Kitty Clicker College"). Regardless of the method you use, be sure to reward your cat with a tasty morsel and tell her how wonderful she is when she does the right thing!

Many cats also enjoy a horizontal scratch now and then. Horizontal corrugated-cardboard scratchers are relatively inexpensive and often include catnip to drop into the slits in the scratcher.



Identification Saves Lives

Microchips and collars with ID tags *must* be standard operating equipment for all cats. Just as collars and identification are mandatory for dogs, breakaway cat collars with a visible ID tag should be for all cats.

If you think your indoor cat will never get lost, think again: According to one study, 41 percent of people looking for their lost cats considered them to be indoor-only pets. According to the American Humane Association, only about 2 percent of lost cats ever find their way home from shelters, mostly because there's no way to identify them. American Humane also has noted that after emergencies and disasters, many dogs are returned to their families, but tragically, cats are often never reunited because they have no identification.

Microchips are a permanent form of identification — but microchipping alone isn't enough. You must register your pet with the microchip provider. If you don't, the microchip company won't have you in its database, meaning that you and your cat will not be reunited. Be sure to update your registration information when you change your address, telephone number(s), email address or any other contact information.

Pet Health Insurance

Simply put, pet health insurance is the best investment you can make for your cat. With pet insurance, all medical decisions are still made by you and your veterinarian. And thanks to new cutting-edge technology and modern specialty medicine and treatments, it's amazing what veterinarians can do these days. Veterinary medical care is a bargain compared to human medicine, but coming up with those dollars may still be challenging. With pet insurance bearing much of the cost, you can afford treatment for your cat that might otherwise be beyond your means.

Nutrition and Weight

Diet Basics

A one-size-fits-all approach won't work with nutrition. The right diet depends on the age of your cat, whether or not your cat has been spayed or neutered, and your cat's overall health and activity level. Diet may even play a role in preventing and treating disease — an excellent reason to see your veterinarian for twice-a-year wellness exams. For instance, a cat in the early stages of kidney disease will typically show no outward signs, although a simple blood test will reveal the truth. Changing to a veterinary diet can make an enormous difference in the cat's health and lifespan.

When you're considering how much to feed your cat, the labels on commercial food are only a starting point. Portions may be adjusted to maintain each individual cat's ideal weight by checking your cat's body-condition score, which your veterinarian can explain.

Appropriate Feline Food

Whether dry or canned, your cat's food must contain all the required nutrients in proper balance. It must also be digestible, which means the cat's body actually uses the food. Look for a guarantee on the label that the food was "tested using feeding trials" to show these conditions have been met. The food must also be palatable, or else your cat will snub the bowl. Even the best food has no benefit unless the cat actually swallows it and the body digests the nutrition.

Do-It-Yourself Diets

Some people want to pamper their cats by offering home-cooked or raw foods. However, savvy owners understand that formulating feline recipes requires research to ensure the correct nutrient balance, as well as getting the amino acids, minerals and vitamins just right, ensuring digestibility and palatability, and avoiding possible health problems. Home-prepared foods formulated correctly to meet the pet's nutritional requirements take an inordinate amount of time to prepare and even then might not be appropriate for that pet. Purchasing commercially formulated cat foods that are already proven to meet your cat's needs is usually the right choice.

There are other risks associated specifically with raw-food diets. Some potential hazards, such as foods contaminated with salmonella bacteria, are a threat to your family, too. Homemade diets approved by board-certified veterinary nutritionists won't harm your cat; however, don't attempt "stewed mouse" recipes found on random websites without first checking with your veterinarian. Many recipes on the internet may seem fine at first, but turn out to be very dangerous to use over time.

Tubby Tabbies



Cats can become obese at any age, but the problem is most common in middle-age cats. Reduce the risk of your cat growing around the middle with lots of interactive play and environmental enrichment (see "Enriching Indoor Environments"). The calorie content of commercial foods varies widely. This is where a consultation with your veterinarian can be a huge help in terms of suggesting foods that are best suited to your cat and helping you determine how much your cat should be eating.

If your cat looks flabby or you can't feel kitty's ribs, your cat may be overweight. Being overweight can play a significant role in the development of various health problems, including diabetes, fatty liver disease and arthritis. Overweight cats may also have a difficult time maintaining their coat and hygiene. And cats who are obese and do nothing except eat and use their litter box (if their owners are lucky) more easily hide medical problems and might become "depressed."

If your cat needs to lose weight, avoid crash diets. Before following the general tips listed here, please see your veterinarian to formulate a weight-loss plan, which may include a special diet and periodic monitoring. Reducing your cat's weight may add years to her life and, most importantly, enhance her quality of life. Remember, for an overweight cat, losing as little as 2 pounds makes a big difference. To help your cat shed those extra pounds:

- See your veterinarian about transitioning to an appropriate weight-loss diet. Also ask about how to slowly reduce the amount of food in the cat's daily meals. Remember, crash diets are very dangerous.
- Provide an enriched environment (see "Enriching Indoor Environments"). Introduce "speed-bump" barriers, such as baby gates or elevated feeding stations, to control access to food and/or encourage the cat to overcome obstacles to reach a meal. Put the cat's meal at the top of the stairs so the cat must move to eat.
- Schedule regular exercise sessions using interactive toys, such as fishing pole-type toys. Even a little bit of exercise is a good start.
- If you are free-feeding, switch to a feeding schedule so you can feed your cat controlled portions at specific times. Cut out table snacks. And if you must leave food out all the time, leave out a measured amount each day and only refill it on schedule.
- Consider introducing foraging devices, such as food balls and puzzles.

Feeding Regimens

A variety of feeding styles can maintain your cat's health, including free-choice and scheduled meals. However, if you have more than one cat, it can be difficult to monitor who ate what when you leave food out all the time. Plus, like us, cats sometimes eat when they're not hungry, training their people to become an automatic food dispenser. Here are some other things to think about:

- Place food and water in a quiet area away from noisy appliances, and avoid high-traffic areas frequented by other pets or people. This strategy is especially helpful for nervous or fearful cats.
- If you must leave food out all the time, provide more than one feeding station, especially in multiple-cat households. In some instances, individual cats should be fed alone to avoid confrontations during feeding and to monitor who eats what.
- Put dry food inside food balls and puzzles to prevent cats from binging and encourage hunting-like behavior so cats have to work and "hunt" for their meals. Small portions of moist food offered in several bowls or dishes located throughout the home also help slow down a cat that eats too fast, and promotes exercise and mental stimulation.
- Make sure your cat's food and water dishes are always clean.
- Encourage drinking by providing water bowls in various locations. Lots of cats enjoy dripping faucets, or to save on your water bill, consider a fountain made for cats. Change the water daily so the water is always fresh. Offering canned foods also helps, since most moist foods contain more water than dry foods.

Transitioning to a New Diet

Cats may become so fixated on a familiar food that they refuse to eat something new. If you must change your cat's diet, these tips can help whet the appetite:







- Offer the new diet alongside the usual food to give your cat a choice. Keep offering the new food even if your cat rejects it. It may take a week or more to get a cat to try something new. Make diet changes gradually to reduce the chance of an upset tummy and increase the chance that your cat will accept the new food. In other words, gradually sneak the new food in with the old.
- Warm the food to enhance the aroma. Cats' appetites can be stimulated by scents they like.
- Add a little bit of tuna juice, clam juice or no-salt chicken broth, which may increase palatability for cats with a depressed appetite. Over time, gradually reduce this extra motivator.

Get Set to See Your Vet

On average, cats visit the veterinarian less than half as often as dogs. Assumptions that cats don't require the same care as dogs or don't get ill as often just aren't true. The CATalyst Council supports the American Veterinary Medical Association's position that twice-yearly wellness exams for all cats are justifiable. More frequent vet visits may be required for seniors and geriatrics, and for cats with medical and behavioral conditions.

While cats are healthier indoors overall, it's a mistake to believe that indoor cats don't get sick. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise! The health status of cats, particularly older cats, can change very quickly compared to humans. Even if your cat seems fine to you, how can you tell? Cats are skilled at masking illness. Often, even the most keenly observant family members are challenged to identify the subtle signs of illness in cats. Sometimes the only early signs of illness may be discovered during a veterinary exam; for example, when your veterinarian is listening to your cat's heartbeat, assessing trends in your cat's weight, checking blood pressure or looking over the results of routine laboratory tests.



Life Stage	Age of Cat	Human Equivalent
 <p>Kitten birth to 6 months</p>	0 – 1 month 2 – 3 months 4 months 6 months	0 – 1 year 2 – 4 years 6 – 8 years 10 years
 <p>Junior 7 months to 2 years</p>	7 months 12 months 18 months 2 years	12 years 15 years 21 years 24 years
 <p>Prime 3 years to 6 years</p>	3 4 5 6	28 32 36 40
 <p>Mature 7 years to 10 years</p>	7 8 9 10	44 48 52 56
 <p>Senior 11 years to 14 years</p>	11 12 13 14	60 64 68 72
 <p>Geriatric 15 years+</p>	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	76 80 84 88 92 96 100 104 108 112 116

There is no question that diagnosing a disease early on usually improves the prognosis, lessens the cat's suffering and, on average, costs owners less money. Twice-annual exams are an investment in your cat's health.

Anytime a cat's personality or behavior abruptly changes, it's a sign that something may be amiss physically. Contact your veterinarian right away.

Cat Transport

Perhaps the most common excuse for not visiting the veterinarian involves getting your cat there. The process of "stuffing" your cat into a carrier can be very stressful for both the cat and the owner, not to mention exhausting. Here are some tips to adjust your cat's view of the carrier. Note that while this process is best started with kittens, carrier training truly is possible at any age, although it may take a bit more effort with older cats.

- Begin by choosing a hard carrier with a top that easily opens or lifts off, or a soft carrier with sides that don't sag inward on the cat. You don't want to have to struggle to place the cat inside, or pull or shake her out of the carrier.
- Keep the carrier out all the time in a safe place (you may want to start in "convertible mode" with the top off), and randomly toss treats inside so it becomes seen as an automatic treat dispenser by your cat.



- Feed your cat in the carrier. If the cat is afraid to enter, start by feeding right at the carrier door and gradually move the food dish farther inside.
- Periodically use an interactive toy (a fishing pole-type toy with feathers or fabric) to direct play to the carrier, encouraging the cat to jump in and out.
- Zip up or close the carrier with the cat inside, calmly pick up and take the carrier with you for just two steps, and then open it. Over time, take your cat on longer tours of your home inside the carrier. If your cat is anxious, you've done too much too fast; back up to whatever point in training your cat had accepted, and then proceed slowly.
- Now that your cat is no longer anxious about the carrier itself, it's time to teach the cat to jump inside the carrier on cue, using a treat or toy as motivation. For example, toss the toy inside and offer a cue such as "inside your house" as the cat jumps in. You can also clicker train your cat (see "Kitty Clicker College") to enter the carrier. If you're still stuffing your cat inside, well, the point is that you shouldn't need to do that. Remember, cats always do better when they believe something is their idea!
- Now, take the carrier with the cat inside to the car — but don't turn on the engine. Secure the seat belt on the carrier and sit there for a few minutes, popping treats through the carrier and telling your kitty how wonderful she is. Then take your cat back inside the house and give her a meal. Once you get to this point with a still-happy cat, you're ready for a brief drive. Try to make the trip as rewarding as possible with calming conversation, treats popped through the closed carrier door or even play. Keep the car windows closed, and avoid loud music on the radio and sharp turns for those first few rides.

If transporting your cat anywhere seems impossible, don't let that rule out twice-a-year exams. Some veterinarians make house calls; find out if yours is one of them.

The Prevention Routine

What vaccines does your cat need? Well, that depends on your cat's life stage and lifestyle. Vaccines are necessary to prevent disease transmission, and generally the benefits outweigh any risks. However, there's no point in vaccinating unnecessarily.

The American Veterinary Medical Association and American Association of Feline Practitioners recommend what they call *core vaccines* — those considered necessary for nearly every cat. The core vaccines protect cats against rabies (required by law in most states), feline distemper (panleukopenia) and upper respiratory viruses. The vaccine for the feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is frequently recommended as a core vaccine for kittens, since the young ones are most at risk because of their immature immune system. The use of other vaccines and the frequency of vaccine boosters are best determined by you and your veterinarian, based on your cat's individual health, risk status and lifestyle.

More Tips for Successful Visits to the Veterinarian

- Spritz the inside of the carrier with a cat-calming pheromone product (a synthetic copy of a cat's "friendly" facial scents) at least 10 minutes prior to the trip.
- A big meal just before a car ride could cause an upset tummy for cats that get car sick. At the same time, taking food away for too long before a veterinary visit can create stress. Ask your veterinarian what's best for your cat.
- If your cat has a favorite toy, bring it along. Also, bring a towel or blanket that has the scent of family members, as well as your cat's smell. Place the "blanky" on the exam table and put your cat on it. Some cats also prefer the security of a second towel draped over the carrier during transport.
- In the veterinary waiting room, keep the carrier away from other animals, especially noisy or upset pets. Your lap is a good place for a carrier (the cat sees and smells you and is off the ground). Ask to be placed in a quiet exam room as soon as possible.
- Try to chitchat a few minutes with your veterinarian before the exam begins, perhaps relaying any changes in your cat's recent behavior. As you do so, your cat can become acclimated to the new surroundings.
- Talk softly; sometimes voices in exam rooms echo or you may speak louder than normal. On the other hand, avoid whispering; a whisper may be mistaken for a cat hiss, and you don't want kitty to think you're upset. Keep cool. If you are upset or worried about a routine veterinary visit, your cat will pick up on your emotions, so take a few deep breaths and think good thoughts.



As part of your prevention plan, your cat should be tested for feline leukemia and the feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) when you first get your new feline friend, as well as two months later or at appropriate intervals suggested by your veterinarian. Cats can also be tested for ringworm fungus. Stool samples should be examined periodically for internal parasites. Other routine screening tests are recommended to get an idea of baseline organ function, including a complete blood count (CBC), chemistry profile and urinalysis, which provide your veterinarian with a nice snapshot of your cat's health. As cats age, they need more frequent blood pressure screening, as well as kidney and thyroid testing.

Fleas, Ticks and Other Buggers

Talk to your veterinarian about regular flea prevention. Even indoor-only cats can be a surprising haven for a flea circus, and cats that spend any time at all outside should definitely be protected. Fleas can carry disease, and once they move in, they're tough to evict. They're much easier to prevent, and life is certainly more pleasant that way.

In areas of the country where a deadly tick disease (cytauxzoonosis) affects cats, any cat that ventures outdoors should also be protected from ticks. Ask your veterinarian about appropriate parasite protection.

There are many choices for your cat's flea and tick prevention; your veterinarian is your best resource to assist in making the right choice(s) for your cat. It's important to note that some flea products made for dogs may be deadly when used on cats. Also, some products are not suitable for very young kittens. To help ensure that you avoid any problems, it's best to purchase the product at your veterinary clinic to make sure it's safe and effective. Even if you don't, check with your vet to ensure that you've bought an appropriate product elsewhere and to receive instruction on how to properly use it.

Finally, among the parasites spread by cats, roundworm is a real concern because of potential transmission to family members (especially children). Roundworm can even cause blindness, and children are most at risk. (See the *Companion Animal Parasite Council* in the "Resources for Cat Owners" section for more information.)

Heartworm Happens in Cats, Too

It's no secret that dogs need protection from heartworms — deadly parasites that are spread by mosquitoes. Although the incidence of heartworm disease in cats is less common than in dogs (10 to 15 percent of the rate of dogs), both indoor and outdoor cats are at risk from heartworms. There is no treatment for potentially fatal heartworm in cats. A hacking cough may be the most common sign of Heartworm Associated Respiratory Disease, or HARD. Sometimes the only symptom is sudden death. That's why prevention is key. Some products designed to protect cats against fleas will also protect against heartworm disease. Ask your veterinarian.

Dental Care

Seventy percent of cats show some oral disease by age 3. Bacteria that cause plaque and periodontal disease can lead to organ damage that can shorten your cat's life. Cats frequently hide discomfort so well that you won't notice problems until they become severe. That's why it's important to have your cat's teeth checked at every well-cat exam.

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Sick or Not Sick? — That Is the Question

Signs of illness in cats can be subtle, so even the smallest thing may turn out to be significant. Here are 10 subtle signs of illness in cats. Each is a “paws-up” to see your veterinarian:

1. **Changes in interaction:** A previously clingy cat acting uncharacteristically aloof, or a more independent cat that suddenly transforms into “Velcro kitty” are examples.
2. **Changes in activity:** A decrease or increase in activity and/or a change in the cat’s daily routine can be a sign of a medical condition. For instance, arthritis is far more common in cats than previously thought.
3. **Changes in chewing or eating habits:** Contrary to popular belief, most cats are not finicky eaters. Look for changes such as a decrease or increase in how much the cat eats. Eating less can be a sign of several disorders, ranging from dental problems to cancer. Increased eating can be caused by diabetes, hyperthyroidism or other health problems.
4. **Changes in water intake:** Drinking more or less water can be an indicator of a health problem, such as diabetes or kidney disease.
5. **Unexpected weight loss or weight gain:** Weight doesn’t always go up or down with a change in appetite. Cats with diabetes or hyperthyroidism, for example, may lose weight even if they eat more.
6. **Bad breath:** If those pearly whites don’t smell sweet as a daisy, there may be a dental and/or gum issue. Bad breath may also be related to a digestive disorder, infection or kidney disease.
7. **Changes in grooming habits:** Fastidious groomers letting themselves go — even just a little bit — might be ill. Over-grooming may be related to stress, pain or skin conditions.
8. **Changes in sleeping habits:** From catnapping more often to awaking in the middle of the night, the explanation may be illness, perhaps associated with aging.
9. **Changes in vocalization:** Wallflowers that begin to vocalize or cats that howl in the night may be doing so as a result of a medical problem. Feline cognitive dysfunction (feline Alzheimer’s), hyperthyroidism, high blood pressure or anxiety are among the possible explanations.
10. **Signs of stress:** Cats dislike change more than anything. Changes in your family’s schedule, new pets coming or going, or even rearranging the furniture can cause stress. A cat that isn’t feeling well may be anxious as a result. Geriatric cats may be particularly prone to stress. Anxious cats may exhibit behavioral changes (such as missing the litter box) and physical changes. Anxiety requires the same professional attention as diabetes or a heart condition.



By the way, because illness is so commonly associated with changes in a cat’s activities of daily living, it’s a good idea to create a “healthy profile” for your cat. That way, you and your veterinarian will know what is normal for your cat so that in the future, it will be much easier to notice when something out of the ordinary happens.

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Teach kittens that touching their mouths is a good thing. Flavor your finger with tuna juice so the cat accepts you lifting her lips. Then take a toothbrush manufactured for pets and toothpaste that is flavored specifically for pets, and begin gradually by allowing the cat to simply lick and mouth the brush. Look for the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) seal that endorses these products as beneficial. Then brush just a few teeth, gradually getting to a point where you can work your way around the mouth. Brushing may avert problems, delaying or preventing the need for a professional dental cleaning by your veterinarian.

Dental diets, treats and chews can help between professional veterinary cleanings, but they don't replace brushing.

Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis can cause severe birth defects or even death in newborn human babies. The good news is that toxoplasmosis is extremely rare, and there's absolutely no need for pregnant women to surrender the family cat.

Here are the facts: The *Toxoplasma* parasite occurs commonly in the environment. If a cat eats a meal of infected prey or undercooked meat, an intra-intestinal infection cycle unique to cats begins. While some cats with toxoplasmosis become ill, most don't — so their people are unaware that kitty is infected. The organism multiplies inside the cat and ultimately reaches the feces. Cats are the only animal to pass on the infectious stage of toxoplasmosis through their stool.

A series of unlikely events must occur simultaneously for a person to get toxoplasmosis from a cat. For starters, your cat has to be infected — and most cats (especially most indoor cats) are not infected. In the rare instances of cats becoming infected with toxoplasmosis, they can only eliminate the parasite in their feces for the first seven to 10 days after infection. After that, the parasite must be in the environment for at least 24 hours before a person or another animal can get infected. So scooping and disposing of cat feces within 24 hours is effective prevention against toxoplasmosis infection. If mom is pregnant, other family members may scoop the litter box, or pregnant women can wear gloves to ensure safety.

What's more, in order for toxoplasmosis to affect an unborn child, this infection period must coincide with the first trimester of pregnancy (after the first trimester, there's no threat to the unborn child). In addition to all of the above, many women have already been exposed to toxoplasmosis, and once they've been exposed and have protective antibodies, they are no longer at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, toxoplasmosis isn't a particular danger to most adults. The biggest danger, aside from that posed to unborn children, is to people with suppressed immune systems. In truth, handling uncooked meat or unwashed fruit and gardening are the most common ways people become infected with toxoplasmosis. To sum it up, it's *highly* unlikely anyone can get toxoplasmosis from a cat.

Whoa! What About Those Accidents?

Having accidents outside the box is the number-one behavior problem in cats. However, it's frequently not solely a behavior problem; it may be your cat's way of waving a red flag that something is physically wrong. Don't wait weeks, months or even years if your cat is having accidents; call your veterinarian right away. The list of possible medical explanations is a long one and includes diabetes, feline idiopathic cystitis, bladder stones, hyperthyroidism, urinary tract infection, kidney disease and even arthritis.

It's important to understand exactly what you are reporting to your veterinarian. Is the cat marking or voiding? Here's how you can generally tell:

- **Marking:** The cat backs up to vertical surfaces with a twitching tail, often vocalizing. The urine dribbles down the face of the vertical surface.
- **Voiding:** The cat urinates on a flat surface, often leaving a puddle.

(It should be noted that there are some cats that mark on a flat surface.)

Even if a medical problem is diagnosed and treated, the cat may continue to miss the box because a new habit has been established. That's why it is so important to get on top of the problem early. Of course, if there is no medical explanation, you are still left with a cat missing the box (see "Litter Box 101" on page 4 for tips). The good news is that with some

Sherlock Holmes investigating and professional assistance, you can figure out why your cat is having accidents and rectify the problem.

If your cat has an accident, use an enzymatic product to thoroughly clean the area. And don't even think about punishing your cat, even if you happen to catch her in the act. If anxiety is an issue (and it's a big factor in litter box accidents), this will only make her more anxious. Punishment or yelling certainly won't serve to teach her anything.

Marking the Spot

Intact males are often the culprits in marking, and neutering a cat before he reaches maturity may prevent this problem. A small percentage of both spayed female cats and neutered male cats continue to mark.

Marking with urine is actually a normal feline behavior; it's just another form of communication, using "pee-mail." Heightened arousal, the need for organized space and the desire to protect "territory" are thought to contribute to marking, so treatments are often aimed at trying to reduce these factors.

A pheromone product (a replication of a cat's "friendly" facial pheromone) may ease anxiety and help the situation.

Consulting with your veterinarian to establish the correct diagnosis and develop a targeted treatment plan is the best idea. The good news is that there are some very effective ways to control this behavior.

Senior and Geriatric Care

While our cats are living longer, unfortunately there is no fountain of youth. Anytime there is a sudden change in behavior of any kind in a senior or geriatric cat, contact your veterinarian. Ask, "Why is this happening now?" The answer likely isn't that your cat is just getting old. Typically, there's a specific medical explanation for the change that may indeed be treatable.

As cats age, more frequent veterinary exams may be in the best interest of your cat. Also, as cats get older, many of their behaviors gradually change. You may notice that your cat doesn't hear or see well and startles at your unexpected touch. Older cats may refuse food because they don't smell or taste as well as they used to. Senior cats move less, seek warmth and sleep more often; find out why and address the problem in the best interest of your cat.

No one wants to see a pet suffer, but cats typically don't tell us how much they hurt (see "Sick or Not Sick? That Is the Question"). A recent study revealed that

Myth-Busting

- **Cats land on all fours:** Unfortunately, cats may get so intent on watching a passing bird or butterfly that they jump toward it, going through an open window or pushing an unsecure screen aside in the process. Jumping at moving objects is what cats are programmed to do. Sometimes cats are amazingly able to right themselves and land on all fours as they tumble from great heights. Even if that happens, their heads keep going and they typically break their jaws and may also suffer broken legs and/or internal injuries. This is called *high-rise syndrome*. While some cats may tolerate a fall from one flight up without an injury, others may not. There are a few cases of cats falling from great heights that manage to walk away, but they are very rare indeed.
- **Cats suffocate babies:** In a word, no. This doesn't happen. Cats may be curious about newborns (cats are curious in general), and they may be especially interested in sniffing or licking milk off baby's faces. The best plan is to allow the family cat to investigate the new baby's room before the baby comes home. As always, adult supervision is urged when there's a newborn or toddler in the vicinity of any family pet.
- **Cats are antisocial:** Community cats almost always prefer to live in colonies with others of their own kind. In fact, it's a good idea to adopt a pair of cats so they have companionship when no other family members are home.
- **Black cats are bad luck:** Sadly, black cats — for no good reason — don't get adopted as often as other cats. Adopting black cats is particularly *good* luck, since it is good luck to save lives!
- **Cats can live on dog food:** While occasional sneaky snatching of the dog's food is not harmful, a daily diet of dog food isn't complete and balanced for cats. Cats require more protein than dogs, specific amino acids and a different mix of vitamins and minerals.
- **Cats need milk:** While a small amount of milk can be given as an occasional treat for some cats, the truth is that many cats don't care for milk. Others are lactose intolerant and milk can cause an upset tummy in those kitties.

most senior and geriatric cats are actually suffering from some degree of arthritis. They don't complain, so it's up to you to be watchful. Cats that once bounded up and down stairs but no longer do so typically aren't just getting old; there's an explanation, and arthritis is likely. Report these changes to your veterinarian sooner rather than later. Weight loss, which includes changes in diet and traditional pain relief, may be suggested. You may also consider adding nontraditional treatments, such as acupuncture.

Geriatric cats sometimes develop cognitive disorders that prompt behaviors similar to those seen in human Alzheimer's patients. Signs may include sometimes acting confused, forgetting bathroom etiquette or loud vocalization (which may also be associated with hearing loss). Since changes in litter box use, vocalizations and activity levels may also point to other medical problems, contact your veterinarian. The earlier you catch cognitive dysfunction, the more your veterinarian may be able to help using diet, medication and environmental stimulation. It's possible that trained cats who continue to think throughout their lifetimes and continue to learn may be less likely to develop cognitive problems, or may delay the onset of these problems.

Saying Goodbye

Sadly, cats don't really have nine lives. Sometimes it's hard to tell when your best friend is near the end of life. What's most important is your cat's quality of life. When you are trying to decide if it's the right time to say goodbye, your veterinarian can offer medical advice that is less affected by emotion.

Nothing is tougher than saying goodbye, but nothing is as comforting as knowing that you are letting your feline friend go before the suffering becomes too great. Euthanasia truly is the final gift — the best, most loving and gentle gift we can offer. Many veterinarians offer in-home euthanasia, a consideration for cats stressed by veterinary visits.

A Closing Purr...

Imagine having a best friend that demands mutual respect but always gives it back in return; a best friend that knows you so well that you don't have to say a word, and yet instantly your mood is understood; a best friend that can make you laugh; a best friend that is clever (maybe more so than you); that helps you relax, often when you need to the most; that is actually good for your health; and that is independent in thought, yet dependent on you for love.

If you're looking for a friend like that, just look to a cat!



RESOURCES FOR CAT OWNERS

Resource	Content	Web Address
GENERAL CAT INFORMATION		
CATalyst Council Resource Guide — online for live links	This resource guide online	http://catalystcouncil.org/resources/
CATalyst Council (see additional specific links below)**	<i>It's All About the Cat!</i> Cat owner, health care and media resources	http://www.catalystcouncil.org
American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP)	Cat health topics for owners	http://www.catvets.com/healthtopics/
American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA): <i>Healthy Pet</i>	Pet care, find a pet, relocation and travel tips	http://www.healthypet.com/PetCare/Cat-Care.aspx
American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)	Brochures for cat owners	www.avma.org/catsrule
Morris Animal Foundation: <i>Happy Healthy Cat Campaign</i>	Campaign to eliminate suffering and premature death in cats	http://www.research4cats.org/
Winn Feline Foundation	Health and welfare of all cats	http://www.winnfelinehealth.org
Cat Fancier's Association (CFA)	Registry of pedigreed cats	http://www.cfainc.org/
The International Cat Association (TICA)	Genetic registry of pedigreed cats	http://www.tica.org/
CAT BEHAVIOR, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION		
Cornell Feline Health Center	Information and videos for improving the health and welfare of cats	http://www.vet.cornell.edu/FHC/
Indoor Cat Initiative from Dr. Tony Buffington and The Ohio State University	Providing a safe and enriched environment for your indoor cat	http://www.vet.osu.edu/indoorcat.htm
Feline Advisory Bureau: <i>Essential Cattitude</i>	An insight into the feline world and why cats respond the way they do	http://fabcats.org/publications/pdfs/Essential_cattitude.pdf
The Cat Friendly Home	Information sheet to help make cats' lives better	www.fabcats.org/behaviour/cat_friendly_home/info.html
Bringing Your Cat to the Vet	Carrier choice and transport (from the UK)	www.fabcats.org/catfriendlypractice/leaflets/vets.pdf
**Top Ten Tips for Calming Cats & Veterinarians	How to minimize the stress of veterinary visits	http://catalystcouncil.org/resources/health_welfare/?Id=101
**CATalyst Council educational videos	Adopt cats in pairs, cat parasites, nutrition, tips for taking your cat to the veterinarian	http://catalystcouncil.org/resources/video/

Resource	Content	Web Address
Dumb Friends League: <i>Play With Your Cat</i>	Providing adequate exercise and play for cats	www.ddfl.org/behavior/catplay.pdf
International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants	Association of consultants on behavior who minimize the use of aversive stimuli	http://www.iaabc.org/
Animal Behavior Resource Institute	Information and videos on cat and dog behavior	http://abrionline.org/
American College of Veterinary Behaviorists	Links for pet owners from Board-Certified Veterinary Behavior Specialists	http://dacvb.org/education/
CAT NUTRITION AND DIET		
American College of Veterinary Nutrition	Pet nutrition information websites	http://www.acvn.org/site/view/58669_Links.pml;jsessionid=20s028q811ewt
Hills Pet Nutrition - Feline	Pet care and nutrition	http://www.hillspet.com/home.html?FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=1408474395183978&bmUID=1271868420625
Body Condition Scoring (BCS) Chart	Shows if your pet is over or under weight	http://www.petfit.com/Petfit/pfCommonDisplay.hjsp?asst=pfKnowTheScore
CAT HEALTH CARE		
AAFP-AAHA Feline Life Stage Guidelines	Guidelines for veterinary teams - what cats need at different ages	http://catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/index.aspx?ID=425
AAFP Senior Care Guidelines	Information on aging cats	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/?Id=398
AAHA Senior Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats	Information on senior cats and dogs	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/?Id=398
AAHA-AAFP Pain Management Guidelines for Dogs & Cats	How to treat pain in cats and dogs	http://www.aahanet.org/PublicDocuments/PainManagementGuidelines.pdf
AAFP Vaccination Guidelines	What vaccines cats should receive, when and how often	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/?Id=176
AAFP Retrovirus Testing Guidelines	Testing for Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/?Id=178
Kitty Test	Learn the prevalence of FeLV, FIV and feline heartworm in your area	http://kittytest.com/
AAHA Dental Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats	Dental care for cats and dogs	http://secure.aahanet.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?site=resources&webcode=DentalCareGuidelines
Veterinary Oral Health Council	Periodontal disease in cats and dogs	http://www.vohc.org/
AAFP Zoonoses Guidelines	Information on diseases shared by cats and people	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/index.aspx?ID=181
AAFP Bartonella Panel Report	Cat Scratch Disease	http://www.catvets.com/professionals/guidelines/publications/?Id=175
European Advisory Board on Cat Diseases (ABCD) Infectious Diseases Guidelines	Prevention and management of feline infectious diseases in Europe (applies to U.S.)	http://www.abcd-vets.org

Resource	Content	Web Address
Veterinary Partner	Animal health information for pet owners	http://www.veterinarypartner.com
National Animal Poison Control Center Hotline	24/7/365 for any animal poisoning	http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/
PARASITE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION		
Companion Animal Parasite Council	Parasite prevention for cat owners	http://www.petsandparasites.org/cat-owners/
Feline Heartworm Disease	Five myths and misunderstandings about heartworms in cats	http://www.knowheartworms.org/mythone.asp
American Heartworm Society	Guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of heartworm	http://heartwormsociety.org/veterinary-resources/feline-guidelines.html
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	Steps to prevent common parasite infections	http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/animals.htm
SHELTER & WELFARE		
American Humane Association	Programs and services for shelters, online resources about pet adoption, behavior and care	http://www.americanhumane.org/protecting-animals/
Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA)	Management organization of professional administrators in the animal care and control field	http://www.sawanetwork.org/
Denver Dumb Friends League	Adoption services, behavior and education resources	http://www.ddfl.org/
PetSmart Charities	A lifelong, loving home for every pet	http://www.petsmartcharities.org/
PetFinders.com	Extensive online adoption service and shelter listings	http://petfinders.com/
National Federation of Humane Societies	Links to member shelters in the U.S.	http://www.humanefederation.org
Alley Cat Allies	Resource for protecting and improving the lives of community (unowned) cats	http://www.alleycat.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=191
AVMA's Microchipping of Animals	Answers to frequently asked questions about microchipping	http://www.avma.org/issues/microchipping/microchipping_faq.pdf
Pet Microchip Lookup - hosted by AAHA	Find the owner of a pet by entering the microchip ID number	http://petmicrochiplookup.org/
CATALYST COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES		
American Association of Feline Practitioners	Cat health care and welfare information	http://www.catvets.com/
American Animal Hospital Association	Veterinary practice professionals and AAHA-accredited hospitals	http://www.aahanet.org
American Veterinary Medical Association	National association of 80,000 U.S. veterinarians	http://avma.org/
Society of Animal Welfare Administrators	Shelter executives and professionals	http://www.sawanetwork.org/
Morris Animal Foundation	Animal health and welfare research worldwide	http://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/

Resource	Content	Web Address
Merial	Animal health worldwide	http://www.merial.com/
Intervet Schering Plough Animal Health	Animal health worldwide	http://www.intervet.com/
Denver Dumb Friends League	Adoption services, behavior and education resources	http://www.ddfl.org/
VCA Charities	Pet care, adoption and insurance	http://www.vcahospitals.com/main/charities.html
Pfizer Animal Health	Animal health worldwide; health and wellness of cats	http://www.pfizerah.com/index_species.aspx?country=US&lang=EN&species=FL&drug=PU
Hills Pet Nutrition - Feline	Feeding and caring for your cat	http://www.hillspet.com/cat-care.html
Bayer Animal Health	Animal health worldwide	http://www.bayer-ah.com/companion-Animals.cfm
IDEXX	Pet diagnostic tests	www.idexx.com/snapfelinetruple
VPI Pet Insurance	Pet health insurance	http://www.petinsurance.com/Plans-And-Coverage/Cats.aspx
Purina Care	Pet health insurance	http://www.purinacare.com/
MWI Veterinary Supply	Veterinary supply distributor	https://www.mwivet.com/Default.aspx
American Pet Products Association	Trade association of the pet products industry	http://www.americanpetproducts.org/default.asp
Karen Felsted, DVM, CPA, CVPM	Board member, veterinarian, Certified Public Accountant, Certified Veterinary Practice Administrator, CEO of National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues	http://ncvei.org/
Steve Dale	Board member of numerous nonprofits, syndicated columnist and radio show host	http://www.stevedalepetworld.com/
MEDIA		
Cat Writers' Association	Organization of professionals writing, publishing and broadcasting about cats	http://www.catwriters.org/
Amy D. Shojai	Founder of Cat Writers' Association, author, radio show host and behavior consultant	http://www.shojai.com/
Franny Syufy	Freelance writer	http://cats.about.com/bio/Franny-Syufy-4919.htm
<i>CatWatch</i> Newsletter	Publication on cat health from Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine	http://www.vet.cornell.edu/FHC/cat-watch.htm
<i>Catnip</i> Newsletter	Publication on cat health from Tuft's Veterinary School	http://www.tuftscatnip.com/
<i>Cat Fancy</i> Magazine and Cat Channel	Cat news, articles, videos, fun facts and resources	http://www.catchannel.com/
**CATalyst Council Cat-Friendliest Cities	Top 10 U.S. Cat-Friendly Cities	http://catalystcouncil.org/media/top10cities/
**CATalyst Council Celebrates the Cat	America's #1 Companion!	http://catalystcouncil.org/media/number1companion/

About the CATalyst Council

The CATalyst Council was formed when organizations and corporations dedicated to cat health and welfare became concerned about study results that showed cats are less likely to receive veterinary care than dogs. In addition, nationwide shelter statistics show that most shelter cats are never placed in permanent homes. The Council promotes the value of cats as pets and strives to increase the awareness and level of care for cat health and welfare issues through high-quality veterinary care, preventive medicine, adoption and cat-friendly products. More information about the CATalyst Council is available at <http://catalystcouncil.org>.

About the American Humane Association

Founded in 1877, the American Humane Association is the only national organization dedicated to protecting both children and animals. Through a network of child and animal protection agencies and individuals, American Humane develops policies, legislation, curricula and training programs to protect children and animals from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The nonprofit organization, headquartered in Denver, raises awareness about The Link[®] between violence to people and violence to animals, as well as the benefits derived from the human-animal bond. American Humane's office in Los Angeles is the authority behind the "No Animals Were Harmed"[®] end-credit disclaimer on film and TV productions, and American Humane's office in Washington, D.C., is an advocate for child and animal protection at the federal and state levels. The American Humane[®] Certified farm animal program is the nation's original independent certification and labeling program for humanely raised food. American Humane meets the strong, comprehensive standards of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, has been awarded the Independent Charities of America's "Best in America" Seal of Approval, has met the stringent standards for financial efficiency and accountability required by the American Institute of Philanthropy to qualify as a Top-Rated Charity, and has received a 3-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's premier independent charity evaluator. To learn more, visit www.americanhumane.org.

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