



Have you adopted a cat or kitten from The Lost Dogs' Home but need some more information? This helpful guide will give you all the information you need to get you started!

Looking for behaviour advice?

Book into our cat behavioral classes or consults. Contact Pet Squad on (03) 8379-4408 or petsquad@dogshome.com

WHAT DO I NEED?

The following is a list of things to have ready for your cat when you take it home:

- Food & Water bowl
- Wet & dry food
- Litter, litter tray & scoop
- Collar & ID tag
- Bed
- Toys (including food dispensing toys)
- Scratching post
- Cat carrier
- Brush (for longhaired cats)

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I GET MY CAT HOME?

1. Set up litter tray and food and water bowls. These can be placed in the same room if necessary but should be placed as far apart as possible.
2. Take cat carrier and cat into a room and shut the door. This step is best done with minimal noise and disturbances.
3. Open the carrier and let the cat come out when it is ready.
4. Allow the cat to explore the room for a while on its own. If the cat is confident, pick it up and place it in the litter tray. This will alert the cat to its position and help to avoid accidents later. If the cat is particularly nervous it may be best to leave it on its own in the room until it increases in confidence. before moving on to the next step.

This is to allow the cat time to become more acquainted with the smells and sounds of its new environment. The amount of time a cat needs will differ between individuals. Don't rush this step. It is important that the cat become as confident as possible

5. When the cat has become confident in its movements around the first room, open the door to the room and allow the cat to start to explore the house on its own terms. Each cat will be different. Some will appear to settle in very quickly and seek interaction with their new family.
6. Other cats will require longer time to actively seek attention and may hide or skulk around the house for some time.
7. If the food and water bowls have been placed in a different room to the initial room the cat was placed in, show the cat where they are.

Note: Some cats have been in the care of The Lost Dogs' Home for some time and may take longer to acclimatise to a new environment. Please be aware moving from a small environment to a much larger one can be very stressful for them.



TIP

Adopting a second pet? Ask our team for advice on introducing a second dog or cat to the family!

WHAT DOES MY CAT EAT?

The cats in our adoption area are currently being fed on wet food in the morning and dry food in the afternoon.

Dry food is good for their dental hygiene but due to it containing high levels of carbohydrates, feeding too much dry food can lead to a cat becoming overweight.

Wet food is high in protein (and often water) but does not aid in the cleaning of their teeth. However, wet food is an important part of a cat's diet. The Lost Dogs' Home recommends feeding cats a balanced diet of commercially available food, such as Hill's Science Diet. A sudden change in diet can cause a cat to show signs of gastrointestinal imbalance (vomiting or diarrhoea). In order to reduce the risk of these occurrences it is recommended that you feed a cat on the same diet it is accustomed to and slowly change the food to your desired food.

Changing Cat Food Guide:

No. of Days	Current Food	Pref. Food
1-3	100%	0%
4-6	75%	25%
7-9	50%	50%
10-12	25%	75%
13+	0%	100%

WHEN CAN MY CAT GO OUTSIDE?

A cat is safer when kept indoors. Outdoor cats can contend with the following risks:

- Traffic
- Dogs
- Poisons
- Cat fights
- Wildlife (i.e possums)
- Sun damage (especially light coloured cats)
- FIV

If you wish to allow your cat access to the outdoors it is recommended that you do so after keeping them confined for a period of time. Training your cat to go outside on a harness and lead is a good method for getting them used to being outside and yet keeping them within your property.

If you have adopted a cat that has had a full vaccination course already it is recommended that you keep the cat confined to your house for at least a four week period in order for them to become familiar with the family and routines; this will decrease the risk of the cat going outside and getting lost.

Kittens should not be let outside if they are less than six months old. Their risk of injury or getting lost is greater than older cats.

In order to reduce their risk of contracting viruses they will be protected against by their vaccinations, it is recommended that you confine the cat to your house until at least 2 weeks after the final vaccination of the course. Cats are at risk of catching Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) if going outdoors. This vaccine is not given to cats before adoption so if you are planning on letting your cat outside then please visit your vet or the Lost Dogs' Home Frank Samways Vet Clinic for this course of vaccines.

A good tip before letting your new cat outside is to get it accustomed to being fed in the evenings. This way it will want to come home at the end of the day knowing that it will get fed. This is also helpful as many councils now have cat curfews that require cats to be indoors from dusk until dawn.

NOT ALL CATS WANT TO GO OUTSIDE

Some cats will have been raised as 'indoor cats' and may not seek to go outside. Other cats will not be accustomed to being indoors all day. These cats will require extra interaction and enrichment inside in order to reduce behaviours elicited by their desire to get outside (e.g. climbing, scratching, vocalising).

Many cats adopted from The Lost Dogs' Home have been in care for quite some time and their initial foray into the outside world may be very confronting. Ensure they have easy access back into the house in case they are startled. It is better that they run back into the house where they feel safe, rather than hide under the house or jump the fence.

WHAT IS CAT FLU?

Cat flu or Feline Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (FURTI) is a virus that passes between cats (humans cannot contract cat flu).

Symptoms Include:

- Sneezing & nasal discharge (clear milky, yellow)
- Ocular discharge
- Open mouth breathing
- Inappetence & lethargy
- Congestion

As with humans and flu, the severity of infection can be reduced by vaccinating cats as early as possible. A vaccination will not always prevent your cat from contracting flu but it can reduce the severity of the symptoms. All our cats available for adoption have received at least one vaccination. The adoption staff can advise you about future vaccination requirements.

Stress is a major contributing factor to cats expressing signs of flu. Stress reduces an animal's immune system, meaning they are more prone to contracting viruses and it will take them longer to recover. Some cats are chronic flu carriers and can show signs of cat flu without having encountered the virus.

Although cats at The Lost Dogs' Home may have shown signs of cat flu previously, or are currently displaying flu signs, it does not make them a poor candidate as a pet. Once settled into a home with routine, a consistent diet, a full vaccination history and proper shelter most cats will overcome the virus on their own.

If you already have a cat at home and it is fully vaccinated it is still possible to adopt a cat that has flu. The vaccinations that your cat has had will help to reduce flu symptoms, if it contracts flu at all. Remember that your current cat can also suffer from stress with the introduction of a new family member, so may develop flu signs as well.

If you note any signs of cat flu The Lost Dogs' Home recommends you contact your local vet or our Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic for advice.



For the two week period following adoption of a cat from The Lost Dogs' Home the consultation fee at our Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic will be waived for your newly adopted pet. Please call to discuss your options and make an appointment.

CAN I ADOPT TWO CATS AT A TIME?

The short answer is yes, however we ask that you consider some points first:

- ✓ The Lost Dogs' Home does not test cats with other animals so we are unable to say with certainty if any cat is going to get along with another. Even cats that are housed with other cats here will not necessarily get along with each other in a new environment.

If you have 2 or more cats you need to have:

- ✓ 1 litter tray per cat, plus a spare one (2 cats=3 litter trays) all set up in different areas of the house.
- ✓ Multiple beds
- ✓ Multiple hiding places (differing levels will be helpful)
- ✓ Multiple food and water bowls (preferably in different areas of the house)

Some cats will never be friendly. At times the best you can hope for is that they will co-exist in your home without aggression. In order to give your cats the best chance at a successful relationship is to provide them with choice (choice of where to eat, sleep, toilet etc.). Giving them choice will limit the competition for resources and reduce their stress.

When adopting 2 cats at the same time it is best if the cats are already acquainted with each other. The easiest way to adopt 2 cats at the same time is to adopt littermates. They have grown up together and are more likely to continue to get along in a new environment.

If you wish to incorporate two cats that are not litter mates into your family, the most successful way to do it is to:

1. adopt a female first
2. allow her to settle in
3. adopt a younger male

This is not to say that any other combination is impossible, just that the above scenario generally produces the best results.

Adopting 2 cats that are not litter mates will further increase their stress in a new home, compared to a single cat adopted. Increased stress levels can lead to suppressed immune systems and the spread of viruses, increased aggression between the cats and potentially redirected aggression to the new owners.

If you have concerns regarding the suitability of a new cat within your family, please call The Lost Dog's Home and discuss the issues with our . We would love to help you find a solution to the problem and help the cat settle in happily.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT DOESN'T FIT WITHIN OUR FAMILY?

Any animal will take some time to become accustomed to a new home. Some will settle in more quickly than others. In order to give your new cat the best chance of settling in quickly it is best to give them routine and choice.

CATS FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WHEN THEY HAVE CHOICES

- 2 or more litter trays
- Multiple beds
- Different heights



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Since our official opening in 1913, we have been a voice for animals without owners caring for thousands of cats and dogs each year. Pioneers for fair animal laws, we continue to work on the front line to reduce the number of lost, abandoned and stray cats and dogs.

We rely on public support to run services and programs, including: proactive adoption, foster care, behaviour rehabilitation, low cost desexing and microchipping, and the promotion of better pet ownership through education.