

**Congratulations on adopting your new cat! Here is some information on how to successfully take care of your cat. Please read the information below carefully and if you have any questions contact us at the Cherrywood veterinary clinic.**

### ***The first day - what do to?***

When you first arrive home, immediately enclose the cat into quiet room where all of her belongings are already waiting for her. This should include a litter tray, food bowls, toys, bed, and scratching post. Place her in the litter tray and leave her there. (It's ok if she jumps out immediately - don't put her back in). Do not move the tray, as she will look for her tray in that spot. Leave her to settle in the room but pop in periodically to per and play with her and also to feed her. (See below for feeding instructions).

On the second day let her roam around the rest of the house in her own time. If the house is particularly large, only let her roam around part of it. Make sure she has access to her own room at all times. Young kittens should be brought to their own room periodically (they might not be able to find their litter tray when roaming)

### *Introducing the cat to an already established cat*

If you are introducing the cat to an already established cat, let the cats get to know each other in their own way. Do this on the second day. Expect hissing, growling, and swiping. This is the established cat's way of intimidating the newcomer and letting her know that she's on his territory.

Never leave the two cats by themselves and always supervise them for the first few meetings. At night or when you are not at home lock the newcomer in her room until you feel comfortable that the cats will be safe if left alone together.

It can take anywhere from a few days to a couple of months before the cats can reach an agreement!

Be sure to have separate food bowls, litter trays and beds for the two cats. Always insure there is plenty of food, as this will make the transition easier as the established cat realizes that there is no reason to fight over food.

When introducing the cat to a different pet, i.e. dog, rabbit, etc, please contact a member of our clinic for more information.

### *Feeding*

Young kittens (between ages of 9 and 16 weeks) are being fed one pouch of kitten food a day (split into two-three meals). Always leave out a separate bowl of kitten dry food and a bowl of fresh water as well.

Older kittens (between the ages of 4 -11 months) are being fed two pouches of kitten food a day (split into 2 meals). Always leave out a separate bowl of kitten dry food and fresh water as well.

Adult cats (over age of 1 year) are being fed two pouches/one tin of cat food a day (split into 2 meals). Always leave out a separate bowl of adult dry food and a bowl of fresh water as well. Kittens/Cats rarely overeat and are grazers so by leaving out a bowl of dry food they will eat it whenever they are hungry throughout the day.

## ***NEVER GIVE A KITTEN OR CAT MILK!***

Although it is acceptable to feed a cat a mix of wet and dry food, it is recommended to feed the kitten/cat a diet of dry food only.

A complete dry food is an optimum diet for your cat as it provides all the nutrients of wet/dry food, it's better for the cat's teeth and digestion, cats will be less prone to being overweight, and it makes your life easier as cats can graze throughout the day at their own peril and you don't have to worry about getting up early or rushing home just to feed the cat! Always be sure to have plenty of fresh water available.

When changing the cat's diet make sure to do so gradually. Over the next couple of weeks, decrease the amount of wet food and increase the amount of dry food. A change too quickly causes diarrhoea. A gradual change shouldn't cause the cat to become fussy.

### **Litter**

Place the litter tray in a quiet area where the cat will have a bit of privacy. For the first while the cat's litter tray has been placed in a quiet room until she has adjusted to her new surroundings. If this is not where the cat's tray is being placed long term, then be sure to leave a tray in the original spot as well as introducing a new tray in the new spot. Again place the cat in the litter tray once. After a week or two of having 2 trays remove the original tray and close the door of that room temporarily.

How often you change the litter tray is up to you but know this - a cat will not use a really dirty litter tray and may resort to using an area in the house instead. How often you change the cat litter depends on the size of The cat, the litter tray, and amount of cats you have, etc. covered litter trays are useful in containing the smell but don't get one with a door if you have a young kitten (or remove the door until she is bigger). Place newspaper in the tray and add a scoop (or 2-3 scoops) of litter in the

tray. Some people choose to change after each and every time the cat uses the tray, others prefer to scoop out the hard bits only and change the litter every couple of days, others change the litter every 3-4 days. You'll learn very quickly how often your cat's litter tray needs to be changed.

### **Behaviour**

Cats by nature need to sharpen their claws, so offering a cat scratching post is essential. Although you offer the cat a scratching post she may not always use it and may use your couch instead! To encourage her to use the post rather than the couch, buy a post with catnip in and rustle newspaper, make noise near the cat or spray with water pistol (aim at her body) when you catch her using your couch.

If you value your furniture more than having a cat, don't get a cat! Try a goldfish instead.

If you do not want her to jump up onto counters or climb your curtains, use one of the methods mentioned above (i.e. rustle newspaper, clap your hands, or spray her with a water pistol) but be sure to only use one behaviour modification trick for one specific behaviour problem (i.e. water pistol for counter walking, rustle newspaper for couch scratching) other wise you will confuse the cat.

***NEVER SMACK A CAT!***

## **Veterinary treatment**

**Vaccinations** - your kitten/cat should have already received one vaccination. ...you must take her to the Vet for her next vaccination which is due on\_\_\_\_\_. She will also need a booster every year for the rest of her life. Vaccinations keep your cat safe from harmful diseases and if you board your cat while on holiday you will need to show an up-to-date vaccination card.

**Spaying / neutering** - if your cat is under the age of six months she will need to be neutered/spayed. Your cat is due for spaying / neutering on\_\_\_\_\_. Ring the veterinary clinic to make an appointment.

**Worming** - your cat should have already been wormed. It is important to worm your cat every 3 - 6 months. Take her to the Vet for worming.

**De-fleaing** - it is recommended to de-flea your cat anywhere from 1-3 months depending on the product used. It is important to get your cat De-flead at the Vets, as effective de-fleaing products is used. Flea collars have limited use.

**Micro-chipping** - microchip is a small chip, the size of a grain of rice, which is harmlessly inserted in the base of her neck. The chip has a 15-digit code, which is unique to her. Your contact details correspond with this number and are maintained by a database. If your cat is picked and taken to a Vet clinic or an Animal shelter she will be immediately scanned for a chip and then reunited with you. When you take your cat to see the Vet for check ups, boosters, etc ask your Vet to scan for a microchip to make sure the chip is still active and hasn't moved down her body.

### *Other things to know*

Adult cats **MUST** stay in the house for at least one month, longer if possible, to prevent her/him from straying. By keeping her/him in the house for at least one month he/she will identify the house as her territory that needs protecting. Many cats let out before the one-month period stray- some go looking for their previous home and others get lost.

Kittens **MUST** stay in until they have been neutered/spayed and if possible keep kittens in as long as possible.

Kittens and young adult cats have very little road sense so the longer you keep the cat in the better. Also most road traffic accidents happen at night so only let your cat out during the day.

If your cat does go missing, inform the clinic, Garda station or pounds in your area, and neighbours. Putting up signs in local shops also proves to be helpful.

Be sure to put an elasticised/ "break - free", safety collar and disk on your cat with at least two telephone numbers on it in case she does go missing.

Cat collars must be elasticised/or "break free" to allow the cat to wriggle free from it in case she gets caught in bushes or on branches. Cat collars should be loose enough to fit 2 of your fingers underneath it and check the collar regularly to make sure it's not too tight. Kittens grow quickly!

Keep washing machine and dryer doors shut and check them before using them.

Keep toilet seat lids down as kittens can easily drown in the toilet.

Keep loose wires tied safely away - kittens love to chew on these.

If you have any questions, regardless of how silly you may think they are, do not hesitate to contact us at Cherrywood veterinary clinic, on **2826464**.

**Good luck.**

