Congratulations on the adoption of your new furry family member! Please read through the following information to help ease your pet’s transition into your home.

Allow Time for Adjustment

No doubt you’re excited and looking forward to forging a lifetime friendship with your new pet. Try to keep in mind the confusion your cat may be feeling at this time. Whatever your cat’s past history, coming home with you is a new experience. Your cat is likely to be wondering where they are and who all these new people are around them. Don’t expose your cat to too many people for at least the first three days. They need to understand who their new family members are and learn the new territory. Wait until your cat gets settled in to show them to your friends and family. The most important things to your new cat during the first three days of their new home is:

- Who are my new family members?
- What is mine in this new home and where are the items located?
- When do I get attention? Food?
- Where can I go to be alone and sleep?

The key to helping your cat adjust to a new home is to be prepared, be patient, and establish a routine. Remember, it will take about 90 days (three months) for you and your new cat to adjust to each other. Your cat is not yet bonded to you and you cannot expect him/her to know the rules of the house, to be trained, or even to hang out with you. This all takes time.

The personality of your cat will change from what you have learned of them so far and will continue to change in the first weeks and months of acclimation. Expect changes! When they feel more secure and confident that they are with you to stay, they will display their truest personalities.

When a cat is first settling in, they may display shyness, anxiety, restlessness, excitement, or crying. They may also have physical symptoms, such as excessive water drinking, frequent urination, diarrhea, or a poor appetite. If these symptoms last more than 3-4 days, please contact your veterinarian.

Food

Feed your cat a brand of dry food that meets nutritional requirements and provides a well-balanced diet. Kittens should be fed kitten food. Fresh water should be available at all times and be sure to wash food/water dishes daily.

Do not give cats cow’s milk, as it can cause diarrhea. Cats enjoy treats but should not total more than 5% of their daily intake of food. Monitor your cat’s food intake carefully, as obesity is a major health problem in cats today.
**Bedding and Litter Box**

When you first bring your new cat home, it is important to establish a small room where they will stay for the first few days to a week to allow for a slow adjustment into the new home. This should be a small bedroom, bathroom, or laundry room. After a few days to a week, the cat should be introduced to a room or two at a time while any other resident pets are confined to another area. This allows the new cat to get familiar with their new surroundings without the other animals frightening them. You can do this several times a day, but only when you are home to supervise. Eventually the cat will get to know the whole house. Your cat should have his/her own clean, dry place in your home to sleep and rest. Provide a warm and cozy pet bed and be sure to wash the bedding often.

Place your cat’s litter box in a quiet, accessible location, such as a bathroom or utility room. Avoid moving the box unless absolutely necessary. Then do so slowly, a few inches a day. In a multi-level home, one box per floor is recommended. In a multi-cat home, each cat should have their own litter box. If there are dogs in the home, there should be a lid for each litter box. Cats enjoy a clean and tidy litterbox; clean daily to avoid litterbox issues.

**Protect Your Cat**

Please keep your cat indoors. Cats who are allowed outdoors can contract diseases, get ticks or parasites, become lost or get hit by a car, and get into fights with other free-roaming cats and dogs. If your cat occasionally escapes from the house or is routinely allowed outdoors (again, we caution against this), they must wear a safety collar and an ID tag. A safety collar with an elastic panel or specially designed clasp will allow your cat to break loose if the collar gets caught on something. We also recommend permanent ID, such as a microchip, to help secure your cat’s return should they become lost or accidentally get out of the house.

Your home should be cleared of poisons, chemicals, fertilizer, automotive additives, antifreeze, etc. These items should be put in places that are out of reach for cats, like locked cabinets. Antifreeze is very tasty to pets and just a very small amount can kill them. Other items that you want your new pet to stay away from are prescriptions, over the counter medications, chocolate, onions, and xylitol. If your pet ingests any of these items, please contact your veterinarian. You can also contact the ASPCA Poison Control Center 888-426-4435 for more information.

**Play and Scratching**

Cats delight in stalking imaginary play. The best toys are those that can be made to jump and dance around and look alive. Your cat can safely act out their role as a predator by pouncing on toys instead of people’s ankles. Please don’t use your hands or fingers as play objects with kittens, which could lead to biting and scratching behaviors. Avoid strings and toys with pieces that can break off and lodge in the cat’s intestines.

Your cat needs to scratch! When he/she scratches, the old outer nail sheath is pulled off and the sharp, smooth claws underneath are exposed. Provide your cat with a sturdy scratching post, at least three feet high, which will allow them to scratch completely. It should be stable enough that it won’t wobble during use. Many cats also like scratching pads.

You should provide plenty of interactive cat toys. Cats typically like to bat at balls, try to catch fake mice, catch the laser light zooming around on the wall, etc. Some cats even like Kong toys. This is a toy that your cat is used to receiving at the shelter. Kong toys are safe to leave with your pet and are a great enrichment toy to help keep your pet mentally stimulated.
Teach Children How to Handle a Cat Properly

To pick up a cat, place one hand behind its front legs, and another under the hindquarters. Lift gently. Never pick up a cat by the scruff of the neck or the front legs. It is important to give the cat a minute with you sitting next to it and petting it, before you suddenly pick up the cat.

Always supervise young children around the cat. Children should not carry the cat like they would a doll or stuffed animal. Children should be taught to move slowly and allow the cat to approach them. Even the gentlest cat could bite a child who has pulled their tail or ears once too often. Children are always excited about a new pet, but don’t allow them to overwhelm the cat with attention and handling. Some cats get overstimulated quickly which could increase the likelihood of the cat swatting at the child or becoming mouthy. Children need to be taught how to play gently with the cat, how to handle them, and to never disturb the cat while he is eating or sleeping. Never leave children alone with a cat, children’s movements are unpredictable and scary to your cat.

Health

Your cat should see a veterinarian for a full physical examination and fecal check at least once a year. It can be determined at that time if additional vaccines or diagnostic tests are necessary. If your cat is sick or injured, take it to a veterinarian immediately.

Cats should be vaccinated yearly. Your cat has been given two vaccines- the rabies vaccine and the FVRCP which is a vaccine against feline distemper. There are many other vaccines that can be given to your cat to prevent things such as feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus, but those options should all be discussed with your veterinarian. The rabies vaccine is required by law and is given around four months of age and repeated every year or every three years after that.

Cats are susceptible to getting ear mites, fleas, ticks, and internal parasites. To prevent your cat from getting infected, keep your pet indoors to avoid exposure to other animals that may be infected. If you notice your cat shaking its ears or head, scratching a lot, or any other abnormal behavior, take them to your veterinarian immediately.

If You Have Other Pets at Home

Cats should be introduced to other pets in the home slowly. Introductions will likely require time and a lot of patience. Cats are territorial, and in general they do not like to share. A cat who’s unhappy about a newcomer may express his or her displeasure by fighting with the other pet and marking territory (peeing on the floor, wall, etc.). Cats also dislike change, and a new cat in the house is a huge change.

First, recognize and accept that you cannot force your pets to like each other. We cannot predict whether or not your pets will be friends, but you can use techniques to increase your chances of success. Most importantly, choose a cat with a similar personality and activity level as the other pet(s) in your home.

The pets should be rotated through the main living areas to give them each time to smell and explore and learn about the other pet in the home multiple times before the first introduction happens. If you are introducing a cat and a dog, the dog should be on leash, and the introduction should be in a room where the cat has places that are high up to escape from the dog if it feels threatened. All people in the room should try to stay relaxed and use calm, steady voices when speaking. Remember, slow and steady wins the race! Sometimes just seeing the other pet is good for the first introduction. The pets might not initially like each other, and multiple, spaced out, introductions might be needed.
It is better to introduce pets to each other gradually so that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. When introducing cats to each other, once the cats are face to face, there will be kinks to work out. If you are really lucky, they may do some mutual sniffing and grooming and you’re on your way to success. They may sit and stare at each other. They might sniff each other, hiss, and walk away. That’s to be expected. This may go on for a few weeks, and then you’ll probably find them both sleeping on your bed. Just remember that it takes time!

Here are some tips to help with the adjustment to the new situation:

- Feed your resident pets and the newcomer on each side of the door to the room the newcomer is staying in, so that they associate something enjoyable with each other’s smells.
- Tie a toy to each end of a string, then place it so there’s a toy on either side of the door. Hopefully, your pets will start batting the toys around and maybe even batting paws.
- A high perch or cat tree is an excellent safe place from a new dog. Do not allow the dog to play with the cat unsupervised- if the cat feels threatened, he could easily claw your dog to keep him away. Keep your other pet’s food dishes up high where the dog cannot get to them and with cats their litter boxes should have lids on them and out of the way of your dog. Some dogs find cat feces as a tasty little snack.

When cats are extremely stressed, you might see them display certain body language such as flattened ears, growling, spitting, and crouching. If that is the case, carefully separate the animals. If the animals continue to show signs of aggression and they fight repeatedly, you may need to consider getting advice from an animal behaviorist. Never try to break up a cat fight by picking one up, you are bound to get hurt. And remember, if it is too much, you can return the cat to the shelter.

Health Care

Regular Vet Visits

- Your cat should see a veterinarian for a full physical examination every year. At this time, it can be determined which vaccines and diagnostic tests are necessary. If your cat is sick or injured, seek help immediately.

Vaccinations

- **Feline Distemper (FVRCP):** Kittens should be vaccinated with a feline distemper combination (FVRCP) beginning at 6-8 weeks of age and repeated monthly until they are 3-4 months old, then once annually. Even if your cat does not go outside and does not encounter other cats, it is still important to get vaccinated every year. FVRCP protects against Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia.
- **Rabies:** Most areas, including Colorado, require annual rabies vaccination. The first vaccine is given at 3-4 months of age, and then given every year. If your cat is current on its rabies vaccine, your veterinarian may administer vaccines that last for three years.
- **Other vaccines:** These may be appropriate in certain situations. Your veterinarian can tell you about them or other vaccines for your cat. This may include Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus.

Tooth Care

- Dental health is an important part of good health for your cat. Oral and dental disease in cats can cause pain and discomfort, bad breath, and disease to other organs. Your cat’s teeth and gums should be checked at least once a year by your veterinarian to check for early signs of a problem and keep your cat healthy.
- Just like in people, prevention of oral disease in pets consists of removing plaque and tarter that forms on teeth that are not kept clean.
ACANTHUS RABBIES

ALL MY ANIMALS

Stay animals in your community can help reduce the number of unowned or stray or reckless in parks. This will reduce the number of unowned or stray or reckless in parks. This will

Welshness area.

To run off-leash in parks or

Supervision does not allow your dog

Keep your dog under direct

Barking

Is called to discourage it.

You can indoors or attempt a pet to

Maintain control of your pets.

Keep your dog from making noise.

If your pet is not under your control, your property may be closed.

Unless in drainage systems, septic systems, and wells, and

Secure chimneys and vents.

Close holes around the foundation.

Protect your home from wildlife.

Exposed to rabies:

Precautions to prevent

Livestock, fowl, these

Your pets, fowl, and

In addition to vaccinating

Prevention

Rabies

The animal you are looking for:

Is vaccinated?

Not vaccinated?

www.colorado.gov/cdph/vet/rabies

www Afghanistanco.gov/rabies

Additional Resources
county animal control department.

- If you see a wild animal acting
  strange, report it to the city of
  Denver Animal Control.
- Keep children NEVER to handle
  strange, unidentifiable animals—
evén if they
  appear friendly. Teach children.
- Don't feed wild animals.
- Observe all wild animals from a
  safe distance.
- Keep pets in, do not allow
  pets outside, even if pets
  appear friendly. Teach children.
- Never feed or approach
  wild animals.
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