



THANK YOU for adopting your new friend from AC PAW!

We are excited you chose to support our Adoption Program, giving a very special cat or kitten a new home.....your home!! Our volunteers work hard to get the cat or kitten to this very important time in their life.....Adoption!! From the time we receive the cat into our care, to the time they are adopted, each volunteer plays a very special role in getting your new friend ready for this special day.

Whether you are a “newbie” or “seasoned” cat owner, please review the “Cat Care Tips” provided in this handout for helpful information on how to care for your new cat friend. For additional information, links to websites are provided (*weblinks underlined in blue*).

There is plenty of information on the internet about cat care. We hope you find this information helpful.

Congratulations on your adoption!

The AC PAW Organization

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This handbook was graciously reviewed and approved by a local veterinarian for content.

1-2022 ed.

It Doesn't Happen Overnight

The 3/3/3/ rule is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.

		
<p>3 Days <i>To Decompress</i></p>	<p>3 Weeks <i>To Learn Your Routine</i></p>	<p>3 Months <i>To Start to Feel at Home</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling overwhelmed • May feel scared or unsure of what's going on • Not yet comfortable to be "himself" • May not want to eat or drink • Shuts down and/or hides under furniture • Tests the boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts settling in • Feels more comfortable • Realizes this could be his forever home • Figures out his environment • Gets into a routine • Lets his guard down; beginning to show his true personality • Behavior issues may appear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally feels completely comfortable in his home • Begins to build trust and a true bond • Gains a complete sense of security with his new family • Sets into a routine <p style="text-align: right;">CatBehaviorSolutions.org</p>

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Important Cat and Kitten Care Tips

1. Importance of **wet food daily** ESPECIALLY for male cats:

Wet food is great for all cats, but is especially great for **male cats** due to their increased risk of developing a **urinary obstruction** (when a cat is unable to urinate or strains to urinate, had blood in urine, strong odor of urine, makes frequent trips to litter box, excessive licking of genitals, even accidental urination outside of litter box). Obstructions are incredibly painful, and extremely life-threatening if not taken care of immediately, so any steps that you can take to prevent it from happening in the first place — like giving your cat wet food — is *highly* recommended. So if a cat has an inflamed bladder, or potentially has higher concentration of minerals that could gather up into stones and cause inflammation or an obstruction, **the more water you have passing through their kidneys, bladder, and urinary system, the more often they'll be flushing that out and decreasing those inflammatory mediators, decreasing those concentrations of minerals, decreasing the grit, and decreasing all of the things that can cause problems.**

Cats are very good at hiding pain!

Just like us humans, water helps flush toxins out of our cats' systems. Water is vital to all of our bodies, and wet food is an easy way to get it into your cat. Another reason why canned food is preferred way for your kitty to dine, is because the ideal meal for a cat is a mouse, and canned food generally replicates that food structure over dry kibble.

<https://www.preventivevet.com/pawsandplay/why-cats-should-eat-wet-food>

How to TRANSITION to new DRY FOOD:

Begin with a **mix of 25% of your cat's new food and 75% of the old diet**. Feed this for about two to three days. Slowly, increase the amount of new food so that you have a 50/50 mix for your cat to enjoy. After two to three days of half and half, you can move on to a mix of 75% of the new food and 25% of the old diet.

Most dry foods are filled with carbohydrates, and it's not that cats can't digest carbs, but they tend to do better on higher protein and even higher fat diets. The ideal macronutrient composition for cats is about 50-60% protein, 30-40% fat, and less than 10% carbohydrates.

A slow & steady transition will help prevent diarrhea and upset stomach.....**it's worth the time!**

2. **Introducing a new cat** to an existing cat-home can take time and patience. Cats are often placed in positions where they're either a resident cat faced with a newcomer cat or they're a new cat coming into an existing cat's territory. Truthfully, it's probably not much fun being in either position.

Throwing two cats into one environment without proper consideration of their positions is just asking for trouble. But, with a carefully planned introduction, cats can ease into accepting one another and may just become lifelong pals.

Here are some tips to make the introduction go smoothly.

Keep Your Cats Separated At First

Set up a special isolation room for your new cat, recommends Jane Harrell, long-time cat foster parent. This will provide her with a safe place to get used to her surroundings and enable you to control how and when your two cats meet each other.

According to Pamela Johnson-Bennett of Cat Behavior Associates, the **special room** for your new cat should have all the trappings of home – a litter box, food/water, some cozy hiding places, a scratching post and toys.

Jane suggests that the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other. You can do this by feeding both cats near the door to the isolation room so they learn to associate the smell and sound of each other with a positive experience. Doling out treats near the door is also a good idea.

After 2-3 days, some cat experts recommend switching the cats' locations so they can get used to each others' smells.

Many behaviorists advise rubbing the cats with the same towel to mix their scents. Johnson-Bennett uses **her tried and true method**: use a clean sock to rub on the new cat's face to capture her facial pheromones. Then, she instructs, leave the sock near the existing cat and let him investigate on his own.

Slowly Let The Cats See Each Other

If all seems to be going well and your cats aren't hissing or growling under the door at each other, after a week, you can try visually introducing the cats. Installing a screen door or even a high baby gate (that neither cat can jump over) can work. It's helpful to have another human with you so there is one person and one cat on each side of the barrier.

Continue feeding, playing with and giving the cats treats within view of the other cats, but don't force it! "If one cat won't eat her food right next to the screen, try moving the food dish a few feet away," says Jane. "Let the cats determine how close you move the dish. If both cats are eating comfortably, try moving the dish a little closer, but don't be afraid to start off with the food dishes ten — or more— feet apart."

Make the Face-to-Face Introduction

The final step in the process is to let the cats be together, face-to-face, for supervised interaction. "Don't worry if the cats completely ignore each other or hiss a bit and then walk away," says Jane. "It will take some time for your cats to learn that the other is a friend and not a foe." Keep watching the cats and let them take things at their own pace as long as no one is starting to bully or harass the other. You should be able to gauge how it's going. If you sense one cat is harassing the other, don't be afraid to seek professional assistance from a behaviorist.

It may take time and a bit of patience but your efforts have a good chance of being rewarded in the long run when your cats become content companions in your home for life.

<https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/cat-to-cat-introductions/>

FELIWAY DIFFUSER and SPRAY (see product website for additional information on products available for different issues)

Cats communicate through natural messages released in the air: "happy messages" (called feline facial pheromones). When comfortable and happy, cats mark their territory as familiar by rubbing their face against corners, furniture, people, or other cats at home. By doing that, they release a message. When present in the environment, these "happy messages" provide calming and comfort to cats.

When modern life conflicts with their natural needs, cats can feel stressed and anxious. When stressed or anxious they do not mark their environment with these "happy messages" anymore and may pee outside the litter box, scratch or hide as a result.

FELIWAY CLASSIC provides "happy messages" to cats and makes them feel calm and comfortable at home. By mimicking the natural feline reassuring messages, FELIWAY helps cats happily adjust to the pace of modern life, restores calm and may help decrease urine spraying, scratching and hiding. <https://www.feliway.com/us>

• Understanding a Cat's Body Language

Even a small child can sense when something is amiss if you teach them what to watch for. If a cat is cowering, and/or has their ears pinned back, then a child must understand that this means kitty is afraid and petting them is not the best idea.

A relationship between cats and kids needs to be one of mutual understanding. And most importantly, trust. To earn a cat's trust, a child must learn to respect a cat's space should they come across timid or afraid. By doing this, the cat will learn that the child is not a threat. This is a very important first step in establishing a peaceful union in a home with kids and cats.

Pet Kitty Softly

Cats often love it when they can find someone to stroke their fur and make them feel special. So, if you teach a child, then the establishment of trust will help a cat to want to seek out the attention of the tiny people in your home. Cats are great at sensing the energy of others, so if a child learns to softly pet a kitty, and to do some with calm, slow hands, chances are the kitty will remember this and look to them for affection when they are craving it.

Cats Have Some No-No Spots

When building the relationship between kids and cats, it's important that an elder instructs children on where a cat's "sweet spots" and "here come the claws" spots are on a feline's body. The **base of the tail, a cat's tummy, and a cat's feet are three areas that kids should avoid petting**, just for good measure. **Ideal areas to pet are the top of the head, under the chin, and long strokes down the spine.** Another good thing to teach children is that cat's are not always crazy about the idea of being picked up and carried around.

A cat is not a puppy or a dog. It's crucial that kids are taught the difference between the two from a young age. Cats can be great companions and excellent nap buddies—but dangling them around or being rough with them is not an ideal situation for them due to their sensitive nature. Kids tend to know what they are taught. So it's an adult's job to teach them how to behave around cats. If they are taught cat manners from an early age, this can show them how wonderful a relationship with a cat can be if they learn to respect them and see them for their lovely characteristics.

Some Quick Additional Tips to Teach Kids About Cats

- *Don't interfere with a cat when they are eating, let kitty eat in peace.*
- *Never provoke a cat. When cats are afraid they tend to react by biting or scratching. This is their only weapon of defense when they are scared.*
- *Cats do not like loud noises or sudden movements as they become startled easily.*
- *Do not ever pull a cat's tail or their whiskers.*
- *Never cut a cat's whiskers, they use these to balance and should never be cut for any reason.*
- **Never intentionally scare a cat.** *A cat's memory is sharp and they won't soon forget it.*

<https://coleandmarmalade.com/2019/02/12/tips-for-keeping-the-peace-in-a-house-with-cats-and-kids/>

3. Cat proof the house:

Cat-proofing your living room

Watch all doors to outside & all windows and sliding window doors including screens on windows
Tie up or cut blind cords and loops. Cats can get injured or even strangle themselves in blind cords. Opt for window treatments without looped cords or cut the loop altogether to prevent problems.

Keep candles up high. Curious cats shouldn't be around flames. Flameless candles offer all the ambiance without being a hazard to whiskers and tails.

Cover up electric cords. Chewing is a common cat hobby, so don't let them nibble on electrical cords, cables, or phone chargers. The result can be worse than just shocking!

Use essential oils and potpourri with care. Some essential oils—on their own or in liquid potpourri—can be toxic to your cat. Do your research before using around your cat.

Watch out for poisonous plants and flowers. Lilies, sago palms, and cyclamen are just a few plants that can cause serious problems for your cat. Talk to your veterinarian before bringing any new flowers or plants home.

Reclining chairs, rocking chairs and couches. Cats can hide in these places, be sure to look before you put the spring action lever down, broken bones and amputation can occur if a cat gets caught in one of these items. Play the “where is the kitty” game prior to moving these types of furniture.

Cat-proofing your bedroom or home office

Keep your nightstands clear. Keep medications, rubber bands, needle and thread, small batteries and other hazards off easy-to-reach nightstands.

Hide mothballs in a drawer and off the floor. Mothballs are toxic for cats when eaten or sniffed.

Power down your paper shredder. Be sure to keep kitty tails and paws far away from these sharp blades! Never leave your shredder on “auto” or “standby”—flick the switch to “off” or unplug when not in use.

Cat-proofing your kitchen

Close your cupboards and pantry doors. Stash cleaners, chemicals, trash, and both pet and people food behind closed doors—and consider putting child-proof locks on accessible cabinet doors.

Keep your trash, recycling, and compost covered. Cats can suffocate in food bags, get sick from compost, and suffer from a lot of other problems when they get into what we throw away.

Keep your stove top covered. Your cat is in for a painful landing if they try to jump onto a stovetop in use, or even a recently turned off burner. Try to keep your cats from jumping up, and use burner covers on hot burners.

Cat-proofing your bathroom

Cover up your wastebaskets. Unlike humans, cats love **dental floss and other string-like objects**, all of which can cause serious digestive obstruction.

Put away medications and supplements. The top cat poisoners are **over-the-counter and prescription medications, as well as natural supplements.**

Keep the toilet seat lids down. Curious cats, especially kittens, could fall in. Be careful not to leave toilet bowl cleaners sitting in the bowl, and **don't use automatic toilet bowl cleaners or cakes.**

Cat-proofing your laundry room, garage, and shed

Do not use “mesh pop-up” clothes baskets. They can become trapped/entangled and unable to get free.

Keep your clothes dryer closed (and always check inside before use). A toasty dryer seems like a comfy place to sleep for cats—but it can be fatal if it's turned on with them inside.

Hide garage chemicals. Automotive chemicals like motor oils, windshield fluid, and antifreeze can be harmful to your cat. Even a couple licks of antifreeze can kill, so stash it away.

Put away rock salt and ice melters. Many salt-based ice melts can cause tummy troubles or burn sensitive paws. Use “pet-safe” ice melt products instead.

<https://www.zoetispetcare.com/blog/article/cat-proof-home>

Your cat is curious, sticking their nose into random places. But their exploration may expose them to some not-so-obvious dangers in your home. It just takes a bit of time and know-how to “**cat-proof**” your house so your kitty stays healthy and safe.

Human Medicines

Some human over-the-counter and prescription medicines pose **serious threats** to cats. **Keep them in a place they can't get into. NEVER leave any pills or vitamins in a pill box or open dish on the counter that could be easily accessible to a cat**, including:

- Antidepressants
- Cancer medicines
- Cold medicines
- Diet pills
- Pain relievers (acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen)
- Blood thinners and medicine for blood pressure
- Vitamins and other supplements
- You may have heard that some common medicines work for people and cats. Never give your pet any pills without first talking to your vet, though -- it's easy to give them the wrong medicine or too much, which can kill them.

Human Foods

Your kitty may beg when you sit down to eat (or try to steal some bites when you're not looking), but **some human foods can be poisonous** for them, including:

- **NEVER** leave a drinking glass with contents available for the cat to get their paw or tongue into or knock over (contents can be toxic and broken glass/splinters can cause severe damage to paws)
- **Alcohol** (highly toxic, can cause vomiting, diarrhea, tremors and trouble breathing)
- **Caffeine** (coffee, soda, tea)
- **Chives**
- **Chocolate** (can cause severe heart, liver, and digestive problems)
- **Nuts** (high-fat and can cause upset stomach and severe toxicity, depending on type of nut. Macadamia nuts can cause temporary paralysis)
- **Garlic** (can cause vomiting, bloody urine, acute weakness, irregular heart rate, and severe breakdown of red blood cells)
- **Onions** (same problems as Garlic)
- **Mustard** (dangerous)
- **Grapes** (can cause kidney failure)
- **Raisins** (same as Grapes)
- **Fruit pits** (remove all seeds, stems, leaves, pits, and cores)
- **Artificial Sweetener - Xylitol** (found in sugarless gums, candies, toothpastes - anything “SUGAR FREE” can be dangerous)
- **Milk and Dairy** (unhealthy, and may struggle with indigestion or diarrhea; digestive tracts can't produce enough lactase, an enzyme needed to break down lactose for digestion)
- **Bacon** (can cause pancreatitis)
- **Raw Meat and Animal Bones**
- **Yeast dough**

Indoor and Outdoor Plants

Common houseplants -- and a few others that you may bring into your home -- can be hazardous to your cat's health, including the following:

- Aloe
- Azalea
- Chrysanthemum
- Hyacinths
- Lily
- **Marijuana**
- Mistletoe
- Rhododendron
- Sago Palm
- Tulip

Insecticides and Other Chemicals

Some chemicals taste especially good to cats. To keep them safe, **keep any chemicals locked away, especially:**

- Antifreeze
- Bleach
- Detergents
- De-icing salts (which pets may walk through, then lick from their pads)
- Dog flea and tick medication (pills, collars, spot-on flea treatments, sprays, shampoos)
- Fertilizers
- Herbicides
- Insect bait (ant traps - liquid form and sprays)
- Mouse traps (both spring loaded type and sticky bait type)
- “d-Con” type mouse bait (pellets, bait trays, bait station)

More Household Hazards

Watch out for common household items that can **choke or strangle your cat**. Some may even **block their intestines if they swallow them**.

- Chicken bones
- Dental floss, yarn, or string
- Holiday decorations, including lights and tinsel
- Toys with small or movable parts (such as LEGO's, Barbie shoes, and other children's small toys)

If Your Cat's Been Poisoned

Every moment matters if you think your cat has been exposed to something toxic.

Call your vet. Post the clinic's phone number in an obvious place, along with the number for the **Animal Poison Control Center: (888) 426-4435**. They can help you know what to do next.

<https://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/top-10-cat-poison>

4. **NO Declaw Policy:**

Try these tips for stopping unwanted scratching

If performed on a human being, declawing would be like cutting off each finger at the last knuckle.

If you look at youtube videos of this procedure (warning - graphic), you will see why we DO NOT ALLOW Declawing of cats. It is inhumane, painful, and can lead to infection and problems later in life (ie. litter box problems, etc.).

Scratching is normal cat behavior. It isn't done to destroy a favorite chair or to get even. **Cats scratch to remove the dead husks from their claws, mark territory, and stretch their muscles.**

Cats are usually about 8 weeks old when they begin scratching. That's the ideal time to train kittens to use a **scratching post** and allow **nail trims**. Pet caregivers should not consider declawing a routine prevention for unwanted scratching.

If you are worried about your cat damaging your home, or want to avoid unwanted scratching, start with these tips:

Keep their claws trimmed to minimize damage to household items.

Provide stable scratching posts and boards around your home. Offer different materials like carpet, sisal, wood, and cardboard, as well as different styles (vertical and horizontal). Use toys and catnip to entice your cat to use the posts and boards.

Ask your veterinarian about soft plastic caps (like Soft Paws®) that are glued to the cat's nails. They need to be replaced about every six weeks. Attach a special tape (like Sticky Paws®) to furniture to deter your cat from unwanted scratching.

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/cats-destructive-scratching>

5. **The Common Signs Of Respiratory Infections In Cats**

Just like humans, cats can get respiratory infections. The only difference is, they can't take themselves to the doctor once they realize they are getting sick. This is why they rely on us, their trusted human servants, to know the telltale signs of respiratory infections in cats. No one wants to see their kitty under the weather, and it's important to take your cat into the vet ASAP should you suspect they have a respiratory infection. **Not sure what the signs are of respiratory infections in cats?** Not to worry, we're here to fill you in!

First off, did you know that viruses are the most common cause for upper respiratory infections in cats? Your cat's delicate nose, throat and sinus region is highly susceptible to this condition. And it's important to know the signs as respiratory infections can advance quickly. **According to PetMD.com**, Feline calicivirus and feline herpesvirus account for up to 90 percent of all contagious upper respiratory problems, and are prevalent in shelters, catteries, and multi-cat households. These viruses can be spread via cross-contamination, like shared water and food bowls, as well as grooming, sneezing, and coughing. And, just like viruses in humans, once cats contract one or both of these viruses, they remain carriers for life.-1:10

Feline calicivirus fact: *Approximately 10% of cats housed in small groups are infected, while up to 90% of those housed in more crowded conditions.* In addition to viruses, bacteria can also be to blame when it comes to respiratory infections in cats. Respiratory infections in cats are relatively common, especially in high-density populations such as shelters and **feral cat colonies**. The sooner a cat receives treatment, the sooner they can heal and the less chance of infecting other kitties.

Here are some common signs of respiratory infections in cats...

Technically speaking, the exact location of the respiratory infection (whether upper or lower) can determine the exact signs/symptoms. The most commonly noted signs of upper respiratory infections in cats are as follows:

- *Runny nose*
- *Congestion*
- *Sneezing, especially several sneezes in a row*
- *Coughing/hacking*
- *Clear to slightly colored discharge (pus) coming from eyes or nose*
- *Fever*
- *Sudden changes in appetite*
- *Drooling*
- *Squinting and/or rubbing of the eyes*
- *Sudden onset of depression*

PetHealthNetwork.com claims that the most common viruses and infections which lead to the development of upper respiratory infections are as follows:

- *Feline herpesvirus type-1 (FHV-1); also known as feline viral rhinotracheitis (FVR)*
- *Feline calicivirus (FVC)*
- *Bordetella bronchiseptica (B. bronchiseptica)*
- *Chlamydomphila felis (C. felis)*
- *Feline retrovirus, such as **FIV or FeLV***

In regards to lower respiratory infections in cats, one might notice that their cat has one or all of the following signs/symptoms:

- *Coughing/hacking*
- *Lack of appetite*
- *Lethargy*
- *Difficulty breathing or rapid breathing (**ensure your cat does not exceed 35 beats per minute at rest**)*

<https://coleandmarmalade.com/2020/01/27/the-common-signs-of-respiratory-infections-in-cats/>

6. **Worms in Cats: Causes, Symptoms, and how to Treat**

Discovering that your cat has worms can be an unpleasant experience for any pet owner. Not only can finding the worms be frightful (and gross), but their presence can also raise some serious concerns about the health of your cat.

However, there are a number of safe and effective ways to treat worms in cats, as well as a variety of preventative measures you can take to lessen the chances of a reinfestation in the future.

Here's what you need to know about worms and how to get rid of worms in cats safely and effectively.

How Do Cats Get Worms?

Cats most commonly contract worms after coming into contact with parasite eggs or infected feces.

A cat may walk through an area with eggs or infected feces, and since cats are often such fastidious groomers, they will then ingest the eggs or fecal particles as they clean their fur and feet.

This can occur in indoor cats as easily as it can in outdoor cats, particularly if multiple cats share a litter box that is contaminated with infected feces.

Cats that live outdoors and regularly hunt small rodents are also at a higher risk of contracting worms because the worms can live in the muscle tissues of their prey.

After eating a rodent that's infected with worm larvae, a cat can develop a worm infestation as those larvae develop to maturity in the cat's intestines.

Can Cats Get Worms From Dogs?

Yes, cats can pick up infected eggs from dog poop, as not all roundworms and hookworms are species-specific. *Ancylostoma braziliense* hookworm can affect both dogs and cats, as well as *Toxascaris leonina* roundworm.

Cats can also get tapeworms via the flea on dogs if they are living in an infested home or yard. If a flea from a dog jumps onto a cat (or vice versa) and gets ingested, there is the potential for a tapeworm infestation to develop.

Types of Worms in Cats

The most common types of worms in cats are:

- Roundworms
- Hookworms
- Tapeworms
- Whipworms

There are also a number of less commonly diagnosed worms in cats that can cause serious health problems and can even be fatal, including:

- Lungworms
- Stomach worms
- Bladder worms
- Liver flukes
- Heartworms

Symptoms of Worms in Cats

Worm infestations in cats may be completely asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) or severe and life-threatening, depending on the type of worm and severity of the infestation.

Common signs of worms in cats include:

- Vomiting (sometimes with worms in the vomit)
- Diarrhea (with or without blood and possibly have worms in stool)

- Tarry feces
- Weight loss
- Distended abdomen
- Skin lesions
- Generally poor body condition and a dull coat

As infestations worsen and symptoms progress, you may see signs such as:

- Weakness
- Dehydration
- Pale lips and gums due to anemia
- Low blood pressure
- Shock
- Death, in the most severe cases

Symptoms for Specific Types of Worms in Cats

Use this guide to help determine the specific type of worm based on your cat's symptoms.

Roundworms can cause a number of serious issues, such as:

- Coughing/pneumonia (if larvae penetrate the lungs and mature in the respiratory tract)
- Vomiting (which may contain adult worms)
- Diarrhea
- Distended abdomen (enlarged)
- Weight loss/unhealthy appearance
- Intestinal obstruction (in severe cases)

Hookworms can cause health problems that include:

- Skin lesions (if larvae penetrate the skin and migrate through the tissues)
- Coughing (if larvae penetrate the lungs)
- Diarrhea (with blood)
- Dark, tarry stool
- Weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Pale lips and gums (secondary to anemia)

Whipworms can be asymptomatic, but in more severe infections, can cause:

- Large bowel diarrhea (with blood)
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Anemia

With **tapeworms**, your cat may not have any symptoms, but you may see worm segments that look like white grains of rice in these areas:

- On and around the anus
- Attached to the fur around the anal area and under the tail
- In/on the feces in the litter box

Lungworm infestations can cause:

- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Pneumonia as the infestation worsens and symptoms progress

Heartworm disease in cats can cause:

- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Lack of appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Sudden collapse
- Seizures
- Sudden death

Bladder worm infestations may not cause symptoms in some cats, but severe cases may cause:

- Visible blood in the urine
- Straining
- Pain with urination

Severe infestations of **liver flukes** may cause:

- Swelling of the liver
- Abdominal distention (swollen belly)

Are Worms Painful for Cats?

Worms in cats can potentially cause pain. The migration of larvae through the liver, stomach, eye, or lungs would cause discomfort as the affected tissues become inflamed from the disruption.

This could present as:

- Belly pain, including gastritis due to inflammation of the stomach lining (potential nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, food aversion)
- Eye irritation (excessive rubbing of the eye, squinting, or discharge)
- A change in your cat's breathing rate/pattern

The accumulation of fluid from protein loss can cause a distended abdomen in some animals, which can be uncomfortable due to the swelling of the abdominal muscles and skin.

It can also cause breathing issues if too much abdominal fluid is pressing on the diaphragm and restricting the normal lung capacity for proper breathing.

Can Humans Get Worms From Cats?

Yes, humans can contract worm infections from cats by coming into direct contact with contaminated feces or soil.

Common modes of transmission include:

- Children playing in sandboxes where cats have defecated
- Walking barefoot through contaminated soil
- Gardening in soil without wearing gloves

Accidental ingestion of contaminated soil or feces can happen in humans as well, so good hygiene practices are vital for preventing transmission from cat to owner.

How to Get Rid of Worms in Cats

There are several “home” remedies that claim to be effective in treating and preventing worms in cats, including garlic, apple cider vinegar, pumpkin seeds, carrots, and turmeric. However, **attempting to treat your cat with over-the-counter remedies or natural remedies for worms in cats is NEVER recommended.**

While it may seem like a faster and cheaper alternative to visiting your veterinarian, there is NO guarantee that those products are safe or effective in treating any type of medical condition, and they could actually be harmful to your cat.

Here are some effective and vet-approved treatments for worms in cats.

Dewormers

Your veterinarian may prescribe an oral or injectable dewormer that will kill the adult and larval worms in the intestine at the time of diagnosis.

Broad-spectrum prescription medications such as Panacur (fenbendazole) and Drontal Plus (Pyrantel, praziquantel, fenbendazole) can be used to treat hookworm, roundworm, whipworm, and tapeworm infections, but they must be carefully administered to your cat according to your veterinarian’s instructions.

Your cat may require multiple doses to kill any larvae that may have hatched after the first dose was given.

Praziquantel is also available as a one-time injectable treatment for tapeworm infections, which works by paralyzing and dislodging the sucker of the worm from the intestinal wall, allowing the worms to be passed in the feces.

Your veterinarian may also recommend starting your cat on a monthly topical or oral flea prevention, since tapeworm infections can recur if there are fleas in your home environment.

What Happens if Worms Go Untreated in Cats?

Worm infestations that are left untreated can be dangerous, even fatal, for your cat.

Migration of larvae through the organs and tissues of the body as they make their way to the intestine could result in severe skin infections, blindness, convulsions, or pneumonia, depending on the path of larval migration.

Ongoing losses of blood and vital nutrients, which should be absorbed by the intestines, can result in progressive anemia, weight loss, dehydration, and death.

How to Prevent Worms in Cats

Worm infestations in cats and transmission to children and adults can be prevented through good hygiene practices and the year-round use of heartworm, intestinal worm, and parasite prevention.

For indoor cats, cleaning the litter box on a daily basis, as well as changing out the litter and scrubbing the litter box on a regular basis is vital for minimizing exposure to contaminated feces.

For outdoor cats, regularly scooping feces from the yard, sandbox, and flower beds will minimize the potential for propagation of the parasite life cycle. <https://www.petmd.com/cat/parasites/worms-cats-everything-you-need-know>

7. The Parasites -Fleas, Ticks and Heartworm- That Plague Our Cats

There seem to be a lot of questions and misconceptions about parasites and cats. I'd like to take this opportunity to point out what these parasites can do to your cat and why you should worry about them.

Cats and Fleas

Fleas are one of the most common parasites we find on cats. Here's what you need to know about them.

- Fleas survive on a blood diet. Because these parasites ingest your cat's blood, anemia is a potential complication.
- Some cats develop an allergy to the bite of the flea. Flea allergy dermatitis (FAD) is one of the most common allergies diagnosed in cats. Because the allergy is a reaction to a substance in the flea's saliva, it takes only one flea bite to cause an allergic reaction. FAD results in itchiness, hair loss, skin sores, irritated skin, and discomfort for your cat.
- Fleas can also carry diseases. Some of these diseases can be quite dangerous for your cat, but others are actually more dangerous for you and your family.
- Fleas also carry parasites, such as [tapeworms](#), that can be easily passed to any flea-infested cat.
- **Indoor cats are not safe from fleas. Fleas can find their way indoors quite easily. They often hitchhike on people coming into your home or on other pets that do go outdoors.**
- Fleas can survive and can resurface during the winter under the right circumstances, even in cold climates.
- Once your cat is infested with fleas, getting rid of the infestation is difficult. Fleas live only a portion of their life on your pet. Their eggs and larvae develop in your pet's environment, which in most cases is your home. Once an infestation is established, the environment will need to be treated as well as the pet and it may take months to completely eradicate the infestation. Prevention is much easier and safer for your cat.
- All pets in the household must receive adequate flea protection to effectively control fleas.

Cats and Ticks Ticks are less frequently seen on cats but are still seen on a regular basis, particularly for those cats that spend time outdoors.

- Ticks are most likely to attach to the area around the face, head, ears, and neck.
- Ticks attach to your cat's skin via their mouthparts and feed on your cat's blood while attached. They do not, however, embed their bodies under your cat's skin.
- Ticks do not jump, fly, or run. They tend to be slow moving but will position themselves in grass and on vegetation where they can latch on to passing hosts. Once on the host, they will crawl to an area where they can feed.
- While ticks tend to be more of a problem for cats that spend time outdoors, it is not impossible for a tick to hitch-hike indoors on a person or another pet, only to find and feed on your cat. There is also one particular species of tick that can establish a stable population indoors and infest your home, posing a threat to people and pets alike.
- Ticks can survive and can resurface during the winter under the right circumstances, even in cold climates.
- Ticks can carry diseases that may be passed on to your cat. One of the most serious of these diseases is [cytauxzoonosis](#), a disease that is often fatal for an infected cat.
- Using a product that repels and/or kills ticks is preferable, particularly if your cat is at risk.
- Checking your cat for ticks on a regular basis, and removing any ticks found as soon as possible, is also a good idea.

Cats and Heartworms At one point in time, we believed that only dogs could be infected with heartworms and that cats were immune. We now know that is far from true.

- Your cat can become infected with heartworms through the bite of a mosquito.
- Even indoor cats can become infected with heartworms.
- While dogs infected with heartworms often harbor large numbers of heartworms, cats typically have only a few. This does not make the parasite less dangerous for your cat but does make diagnosis of heartworm disease more challenging.
- In cats, heartworm disease tends to manifest as a respiratory disease. It often mimics [feline asthma](#).
- Sudden death is one of the recognized symptoms of feline heartworm disease. Death may occur so suddenly that there is no chance to do anything medically to stabilize or save the affected cat.
- There is no safe or effective cure for cats infected with heartworms. The medication used to treat dogs for heartworms (Immiticide) is not safe for cats.
- Cats with heartworm disease are usually treated symptomatically.
- Heartworms can be prevented. There are numerous medications that are both safe and effective in protecting your cat from heartworms. Heartworm preventive medication should be considered as part of a comprehensive preventive health care plan for all cats, as should flea and tick control. Your veterinarian is your best source of information regarding which parasite products are best suited to your cat.

<https://www.petmd.com/blogs/thedailyvet/lorieahuston/2014/july/fleas-ticks-heartworms-and-your-cat-31861>

Protect Your Cat From Harmful Parasites With **Catego[®] Kills fleas, ticks, and chewing lice**

- Patented applicator makes it easy to apply and minimizes the risk of skin abrasion.
 - Non-greasy, Quick-drying
 - Small-volume application, One low-volume formulation.
 - For all size cats weighing over 1.5 pounds and over 8 weeks of age
 - Available in 1-dose, 3-dose and 6-dose packs.
 - Protection lasts for a full month with just one application
 - Catego[®] was designed specifically for cats and only cats. It is the only product with the unique combination of these three proven active ingredients: Dinotefuran, Fipronil and Pyriproxyfen.
 - <https://www.categocat.com/about-the-product/>
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How to Prevent UTI Infections in Cats

Co-authored by Pippa Elliott, MRCVS Veterinarian, March 29, 2019, [wikihow.com "How to Prevent Urinary Tract Infections in Cats"](https://www.wikihow.com/Prevent-Urinary-Tract-Infections-in-Cats); <https://www.wikihow.com/Prevent-Urinary-Tract-Infections-in-Cats>

→ **Keep your cat at a healthy weight**

Obese cats tend to have more problems than normal weight cats. Use the Body Condition Scoring system to determine if your cat is a healthy size. These charts rank your cat on a scale of 1 to 9, to determine if your cat is overweight, underweight, or at the ideal weight. The scale considers:

1. how easy it is to feel the ribs
2. how obvious the waist and abdominal tuck are
3. how much excess fat is below the skin
4. how much muscle mass is present



→ **Give your cat canned cat food.**



Canned cat food more closely resembles the natural diet (**rodents, birds**) of cats and has **more protein and moisture than dry food**. If your cat is hooked on dry food, consider gradually adding small amounts of canned food and see if you can get your cat to transition to an all or mostly all canned diet. If canned food just will not go over with your cat, try offering small amounts of cooked beef or chicken in the form of muscle or organ meat to entice them.

**** Do not supplement a commercial diet with medicines that promote urinary acidity.** Too much of a "good thing" will **cause** an imbalance leading to new problems. Talk to your **vet before giving your cat any urinary medications.**

→ **Be sure your cat always has fresh, clean water**



Water is key to a happy urinary tract. Keeping the urine at the proper pH will help prevent crystal and stone formation in the urine. By feeding a balanced diet with plenty of water, the crystals are flushed out of the bladder. This **prevents** urinary problems.

Some cats will drink more water if it's flowing, so providing a **kitty water fountain** may help them **consume more** water than if it is just in a bowl. If your cat uses a bowl, be sure to clean it regularly.

Have multiple places for your cat to drink. **If you have more than one cat,** **sometimes** dominance over certain food **and** water dishes is an issue.

→ **Provide enough litter boxes for your cat or cats**



The rule is to have 1 more litter box than the number of cats in your home when practical. So if you have 2 cats, you should have 3 litter boxes. Check litter **boxes frequently and remove waste as soon as you see it.** **Wash the litter boxes with soap and water every** time you change the litter. Do not use bleach, as the residual odor may **repel and discourage your cat from using the box.**

→ **Minimize stress to your cat.**

Some cats are just more nervous and worked up than other, more mellow cats. **Anxiety** does seem to play a part in urinary issues with cats, so try to **keep changes in your cat's routine to a minimum.** Try to **feed** her at the same time everyday. Be aware that a change in the weather or a move to a new home could trigger a problem with a cat's urinary tract.

Warnings:

- If you suspect a cat's urinary tract is completely blocked, seek immediate veterinary care. Death may result in 24 to 48 hours without urethral catheterization to relieve the blockage or other treatment, including surgery. A cat's urethra could be blocked with mucus, crystals and/or stones.

Observing and Treating Urinary Tract Infections in Cats

→ **Watch for symptoms of urinary tract infections in cats.**

Pay attention to your cat and note if you see any of the following:

- Straining to urinate - yowling, or making other sounds, while urinating
- Urinating only small amounts of urine at a time, or none at all
- Blood in the urine
- Frequent trips to the litter box
- Urinating outside the litter box
- Changes in water consumption, often an increase
- Increased licking in the genital area

→ **Know when to take your cat to the veterinarian.**

Take your cat to the veterinarian immediately if you see blood in your cat's urine or if the cat cannot urinate at all.

• **Male cats are more likely to become blocked with sediment from crystals or stones in their urethras, usually caused by inflammation.** This will ultimately result in a painful shut down of the kidneys and eventual death. Take your cat to the vet as soon as you notice these urine problems.

→ **Understand the tests your Vet may perform**

When you take your cat to the veterinarian to diagnose the urinary problem, she will do tests to determine the exact problem and how to treat it.

These tests may include:

- a **urinalysis** to determine PH concentration and the presence of bacteria or crystals
- a urine culture to determine if there is an infection, what kind of bacteria are present, and which antibiotics will kill those bacteria
- **blood work** to determine kidney health
- **x-rays** to look for stones in the bladder and the size and shape of the bladder and kidneys
- **an ultrasound** to look into the bladder for tumors and evaluate the bladder wall (the inside of the kidneys and the ureters)

→ **Realize your cat may need to be hospitalized.**

Hospitalization may ensure that your cat gets the care and treatment she needs. This might include an **intravenous catheter** to give the cat fluids, placing a **urinary catheter** in the urethra to help clear a blockage, or **antibiotics** to treat a urinary tract infection. Your cat will most likely need to stay in the hospital for a few days.

Male cats that have experienced one episode of complete or partial urinary blockage are likely to have problems again. If this is the case, you really need to **follow your veterinarian's advice and maintain a proper diet, household regimen (floor/counter cleaning agents) and regular medical care.**