

**Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter
Cat Adoption Information**



Congratulations on adopting your new cat and becoming a part of the Burlington County Animal Shelter family!

We hope you will find the following information useful in raising and training your new family member! Please remember that while your pet is gone from our shelter, he is not gone from our hearts. Please contact us with any questions you may have in the future at fobcas@yahoo.com.

The first thing you should know about your new cat is that most cats hate to travel. After the ride home from the animal shelter, he/she will most likely not be in the mood for fun.

For the trip home, confine your pet in a sturdy cat carrier. Don't leave him/her loose in your car where he/she might panic and cause an accident. To make the transition to your household as comfortable as possible, select a quiet, closed-in area, such as your bedroom or a small room away from the main foot traffic, and put a litter box in it. Let your new cat become acquainted with that limited area for the first few days.

Let him/her sniff all your belongings and investigate all the hiding places. Over the next few days, slowly introduce the cat to the rest of your house, including any other pets and household members. It will take a little while, but the cat will eventually begin to feel at home.

Cats vary in how demanding they are as pets, so let yours guide you as to the level of attention he/she wants, whether it's your hand for petting or your lap for sitting. Provide your cat with the necessary creature comforts and give him/her the companionship he/she seeks, and the cat will be content.

The following are tips about cats' requirements for happy lives:

Cleanliness: Your new cat will prize a clean environment and a clean body. Cats are naturally fastidious and most will instinctively use a litter box; for some, you may need to place the cat in the box and make little scratching motions with their front paws so they get the idea. Many place such a premium on cleanliness that it's best if you clean the box daily or several times a week. Cats also value privacy, so place the litter box in a convenient but secluded spot.

Most cats will spend hours grooming themselves, but even the most avid groomer can use a little help from time to time. Nail clipping and ear and teeth cleaning are tasks you can do to keep your cat well groomed. Even short-haired cats benefit from weekly brushing, a task that can be pleasurable for both of you.

Security: Provide your cat with safety and security. Always use a cat carrier when transporting your pet. Protect him/her by making sure that all the windows in your home

are securely screened and that the washer and dryer are kept closed and are inspected before each use. Get into the habit of ensuring that drawers, closets and cupboards are uninhabited before you close them. For your own security, put a collar and tag on your feline -- there's always the chance he/she may slip outside by mistake, and you want to make sure your cat can be identified as your pet.

Health Care: Animal shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not been previously vaccinated. Despite the best efforts of shelter workers, viruses can spread and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots -- including feline leukemia -- and in good general health before introducing your new cat.

Take your new cat to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, the cat will receive a health check and any needed vaccinations.

House Rules: Provide your cat with some basic training to help him/her get along in your home. It's true that cats usually have their own ideas about how to do things. Even so, most cats can be taught to obey simple rules like not scratching the couch, eating plants or jumping up on the kitchen counter. With repeated, gentle, and consistent training, your cat will learn. Yelling at your cat never works. Instead, positively reward the cat and provide him/her with alternative choices. A good scratching post -- coupled with a handy squirt gun filled with water -- can save your couch, your chair and your nerves. If you help your cat understand the rules and give him/her a satisfying outlet for any scratching impulses, there will be no need to have the cat declawed, an unnecessary operation no cat should endure.

Room for Fun: Finally, provide your cat with an interesting indoor environment. Cats love to play and will appreciate simple and inexpensive toys. Ping-pong balls and paper bags can provide hours of fun. A comfortable perch by a window can become your cat's very own entertainment and relaxation center. Toys are very important for cats. They not only fight boredom, they also give cats a chance to express their prey-chasing drives. If you're the one moving the toy while your cat chases after it, playtime can be a bonding experience for both of you.

Enjoy Your Rewards: Now that you've made sure all the basic requirements are met, you can relax and enjoy your new cat. It may take a couple weeks for him/her to adjust to life with you. But before you know it, you'll be curled up on the couch together, watching TV like old pals, and you won't remember what life was like without your loving kitty.