

# cat

## care sheet



Worshipped as gods and hunted as companions to witches, cats have fascinated us throughout time. Still somewhat mysterious, cats have recently surpassed dogs as the most popular pet in America.

### facts

scientific name:	Felis catus
average adult size:	8 to 13 lbs. depending on breed
average life span:	up to 13+ years with proper care
diet:	carnivore

**Before deciding to purchase a cat, consider adoption. Your local Petco store partners will be able to provide you with additional information.**



*Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.*

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

## diet

A well-balanced cat diet consists of:

- Most will do very well on advanced, natural or essential cat foods. Match food to life stage and activity level.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake.
- Fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your cat:

- Feed 2 to 3 small meals daily; cats prefer to eat throughout the day and this is the best feeding method if the food can be kept fresh and the cat will not overeat. Watch cat for signs of boredom, as bored cats will seriously overeat if food is always available. Offering wet food to your cat is a good way to help ensure they get adequate hydration.
- Using a pet fountain to provide fresh, clean, moving water for your cat may stimulate them to drink more, helping them stay hydrated.

## housing

- Cats should be kept indoors for their safety and the safety of wild

animals, especially song birds. Always have a separate litter box plus one for each cat, with at least one litter box on each level of the cat's home.

## normal behavior

- Playful, especially as kittens; need daily interaction with a loving pet parent to feel secure.
- Rubbing their head or body against an object or pet parent is a way of "scent marking" and saying "this is mine!" Cats do this to objects and people they have accepted into their home.
- Growling, hissing or spitting is a sign of fear or frustration; purring, short meows and squeaks generally show contentment and affection.

## common myths

**Myth: A female cat should only be spayed after her first heat or first litter.** Partner with your veterinarian and spay a female cat as early as possible. Allowing a cat to have one litter first provides no benefit.

**Myth: Cats are aloof, independent and not very time-consuming.**

## red flags

- Missing fur
- Diarrhea, vomiting
- Uneven gait
- Distressed breathing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Weight loss
- Lethargic
- Excessive thirst
- Coughing, hacking

*If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.*



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

Cats may act aloof at times, and are definitely more independent than the average dog, but they still require frequent and consistent interaction and acceptance to feel secure.

**Myth: Putting a bell on my cat will prevent it from catching birds and small animals.**

Cats can learn to move silently even while wearing a bell; the constant jangle of the bell can be quite irritating to a cat's hearing.

**Myth: Declawing is a simple procedure.**

Declawing a cat removes the entire first joint of the cat's toe. Talk carefully with your vet about surgical and non-surgical options before deciding to declaw your cat. Surgical options are always a last resort.

**grooming & hygiene**

- Self-grooming and naturally clean.
- Occasional bathing may be needed.
- Medium- and long-hair cats will need daily brushing and occasional hairball preventive treats.
- Most Petco stores offer professional grooming services.
- Trim claws as needed.

- Work with your veterinarian to determine the best way to manage your cat's dental health.

**signs of a healthy animal**

- Active and responsive
- Even gait
- Clean fur
- Clear, unlabored breathing
- Clear eyes and nose
- Eats and drinks regularly

**vaccination info**

Your kitten requires a number of vaccinations including:

**8 weeks - First series**

Feline rhinotracheitis, Feline calicivirus, Feline panleukopenia

**9-11 weeks - Second series**

Feline rhinotracheitis, Feline calicivirus, Feline panleukopenia

**12 weeks+ - Final series**

- Feline rhinotracheitis, Feline calicivirus, Feline panleukopenia
- Rabies (required at 16 weeks and then annually)

Consult your veterinarian for the vaccination schedule that is right for your cat.

**common health issues**

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Loose stools caused by poor diet, stress, unclean housing or other illness.	Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.
Hairballs	Coughing, hacking or vomiting.	Regular use of hairball preventive. Contact a veterinarian if persistent or losing weight.
Mites, fleas, ticks	External parasites; cause itching, loss of hair, certain diseases.	Use products specially designed for cats. Consult a veterinarian.

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Advanced, natural or essential cat food
- Litter box and liners
- Grooming supplies
- Food dish
- Water dish
- Litter and scoop
- Scratching post
- Toys
- Flea and tick preventive
- Treats
- Bed
- Collar with ID tag
- Book on cat care

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's library of books on cats and our many private brand items available for the care and happiness of your pet.

Because all cats are potential carriers of infectious diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your cat or their accessories. Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before adopting or caring for a cat and should consider not having a cat as a pet.

Go to **[cdc.gov/healthypets](http://cdc.gov/healthypets)** and **[petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet)** for more information about cats and disease.



© 2015, Petco Animal Supplies, Inc.  
All rights reserved. (06/2015)