

## Your New Cat

### Settling In: Do's

- Provide a “shutdown” period by limiting new visitors and interactions with other pets. Give your new cat plenty of time to slowly get to know their new home and adjust to their new environment. Your adopted cat will need time to decompress and transition from shelter to home life.
- Prepare a small quiet area, such as a single room in your home, with your new cat's food, water, uncovered litter box, scratching post, toys, and bed. A spare bathroom is often a perfect place that is easy to clean. Keep your cat in this confined space for several days to weeks to allow your cat to slowly adapt. Some cats may take longer than others to become comfortable in their room and allowed access to the whole house.
- Provide your cat with multiple hiding places where they can seek privacy if desired. Large paper bags or a cardboard box with a blanket and holes cut in both sides work great. Offer hiding places on the ground as well as up high.
- Let the cat come to you at first. Use calming body language like sitting facing the side, blinking, speaking softly, and extending a hand to let the cat sniff you, and allow the cat to approach you. You can also toss a few treats gently nearby.
- Build a bond with your cat by introducing play when they are comfortable. Feather toys, crinkle balls, and blowing bubbles are some fun and easy ideas. Be sure to supervise your cat with toys to ensure safety.
- Slowly allow your cat to explore other areas of the home.
- Supervise all interactions with children and teach children to interact with the cat calmly and appropriately.
- “Pet-proof” your home by locking up medications and poisonous chemicals and stowing electrical cords and other hazards out of reach.
- Scoop the litter box once daily and empty it completely to clean every two weeks-one month. When cleaning, opt for a mild soap and avoid strong-smelling detergents or ammonia to prevent litter box problems.
- Your newly adopted cat may still be recovering from spay/neuter surgery. It is important to follow all post-operative instructions.
- Review the topics in the “Cat Behavior Library” on the the SafeHaven “Behavior & Training” webpage under the “Resources” tab <https://safehavenhumane.org/behavior-training-resources/> for more tips!

### Settling In: Don'ts

- Don't give too much space too soon as this may overwhelm the cat. As they adjust, you can increase their space and freedom.
- Don't panic if your new cat hides for the first several days (or even longer) in their new home. Give them time to settle in. Patience is key.
- Do not play with your cat or kitten with your hands. Using your hands as a toy teaches your cat that it is okay to bite or scratch you.
- Don't force your cat to come out from hiding or stay near you. Instead, coax them to you by playing with an interactive toy or staying near their food bowl while they are eating. Soon they will realize that the stranger (you) are the source of good things, and warm to you and your attention.
- Don't introduce other pets too soon. Use doors, baby gates, and leashes to help pets adjust and maintain a safe distance until you can completely trust them together.
- Don't expect your cat to have a hearty appetite right away. Stress and new foods can cause a lack of appetite. At first, leave out small amounts of food and add a small special treat to encourage feeding. If the cat has not eaten or drunk anything in 24 hours or seems lethargic or sick within 10 days of adoption, contact SafeHaven's medical department at (541) 928-2789 ext. 117.
- Don't stow away your carrier until your next vet visit. Take the door off and place a comfy blanket and tasty treats inside the carrier for your cat to explore when they please. This will help build positive associations with the carrier, making traveling much easier on everyone. Offer treats or a small bowl of wet cat food in the carrier several times per week.
- Do not allow children to disturb the cat while they are eating or using the litter box.

## Supplies

Consider investing in the following supplies. They can all be purchased at SafeHaven Humane Society.

- **Food:** SafeHaven encourages feeding a high-quality cat food. Talk with your veterinarian about diet requirements. Most cats do well on a 2x per day feeding schedule. Kittens under 6 months should eat a kitten-specific food. Younger kittens should be free-fed dry food, or be on a 4x per day feeding schedule, and can also get a portion of wet food 1-2x per day.
- **Dishes:** Ceramic or stainless steel are preferred because they are more easily disinfected than plastic. Make sure food and water dishes are not placed near the litter box.
- **Litter box:** In most cases, cats prefer an uncovered litter box. For everyone cat in your home, there should be one litter box and then one additional box.
- **Litter:** Most cats prefer unscented, sand-like litter. You may need to experiment until you find the litter your cat prefers.
- **Scratching Post:** Your cat needs an appropriate place to scratch. Scratching is a natural behavior that helps shed the sheath of their claws and mark territory. Scratching materials vary, so try a few to see which one your cat likes.
- **Toys:** Cats enjoying chasing and hunting toys. Avoid toys with small parts, string, and ribbon that can break off and be ingested.
- **Bed:** Your cat needs a soft, dry, clean place to lie down.
- **Grooming:** Choose a brush appropriate for your cat's fur. Purchase nail clippers to keep your cat's claws trimmed.
- **Collar/ID tag:** Even indoor-only kitties should wear a breakaway safety collar and ID tag.
- **Enzyme-based cleaner:** These cleaners help with potty accidents by removing all residual odors from accident sites.

## The Ride Home

Keep your cat secure on the ride home by keeping them inside the carrier until safely inside the home and their new "quiet room" with doors shut.

- Do not allow children to tease or excite the cat.
- Do not open the carrier to pet the cat.

- Have an adult carry the cat in its carrier to and from the vehicle to prevent swinging the carrier.
- Take the cat directly home. Do not stop on the way home for supplies or to visit friends.
- Do not leave the cat unattended in the car.

## On Arrival Home

- Place your cat in their "quiet room" with doors shut. If the room is a bathroom, make sure the toilet lid is down. Check for and secure any loose screens or open windows. Ensure that cats and kittens are not able to jump in the washer or dryer.
- The room should have a litter box at one end and food, fresh water, and a bed/hiding place at the other.
- Place your cat calmly in the litter box a few times to ensure they know the location.
- Provide vertical spaces up high to make cats feel safer.
- Give your new cat time to adjust. Allow several days to weeks. Gradually give more freedom.
- Keep your new cat separated from other pets.
- Provide toys, perches, and social interactions to help your cat bond with you and acclimate.

## Cat to Cat Introductions

Ensure that your new cat is not showing any signs of illness prior to introducing to an existing cat. Allow a quarantine and observation period of 3-7 days before introducing to another cat(s). If your new cat is showing signs of illness within 10 days of adoption, contact SafeHaven's medical department at (541) 928-2789 ext. 117.

Allow your new cat time to settle in before starting this process. Calming products such as Feliway can help reduce stress when introducing new cats into a home. Don't rush introductions – slow and steady is best. Your original cat will be aware of the newcomer. Allow them to sniff each other under the door. After a day or so of beginning the introduction process, swap the cats so they can investigate each other's areas. This will help them get used to each other's scent. If all seems well, allow the cats to meet through a baby gate (keep in mind they may be able to jump it!), screen, or crate. Offering treats and food rewards will help build a positive association. Some hissing and growling at first is normal, but all-out physical attacks are less common. However, be prepared with a squirt bottle and towel or

blanket to separate the cats. Allowing them to fight will extend and damage the introduction period. Never punish the cats if the meeting does not go as anticipated as this will only create a negative association with each other. Take a deep breath and be calm – if you are worried or tense, the cats will be too.

After a comfortable period of introductions through a barrier, increase the time and area the new kitty can explore outside of their “quiet room”. Start with short periods of contact, increasing as time goes on. Reward both cats frequently for any calm and friendly behavior. Separate them when you’re not home to supervise at first, even if all seems well.

Once the new cat has been allowed access to the rest of the home, leave their safe room intact so they may still choose to take refuge there. Improvements in attitudes toward each other should begin in a week or so, but do not be discouraged if it takes longer. Different cats have different personalities, and each case will be unique. Make sure to lavish all of your cats with attention. Interaction levels between adjusted cats may vary – some may groom, sleep, and play together, and others may just tolerate the other’s existence, which is okay too!

## **Cat to Dog Introductions**

Allow your new cat time to settle in before starting this process. Don’t rush introductions – slow and steady is best. Prior to starting the introduction, ensure that your cat has a clear escape route, and that the dog does not have access to the cat’s food, water, and litter box. Baby gates and cat doors can be used to block a dog’s access. Let them sniff each other under the door at first.

Place the cat on a raised surface like a table or dresser when beginning the introduction to a new dog; high vantage points help cats feel less threatened. Put your dog on a leash and be prepared with a squirt bottle and towel or blanket to throw over the cat if they attack the dog. Allow them to see each other (try to keep the dog’s leash loose to avoid adding tension) and then distract the dog with a treat or praise. Avoid any prolonged, hard stares. Carefully observe your dog’s body language. If all seems well, keep the leash clipped to the dog’s flat collar as a “drag line” and let them drag it around the house, so you can grab it and intervene if necessary. Avoid letting your dog become excited or

aroused with the new cat around as this can lead to chase/prey drive.

It is normal for a cat to hiss and growl at first, especially if they have not lived with a dog before. Ensuring that the cat has an escape route and vertical spaces to leap to will help them feel more comfortable. Do not let the dog chase or corner the cat and vice versa. Do not restrain the cat in your lap or arms, give them the freedom to move away if they need to.

Until you are completely comfortable with the situation, separate them when you are not there to supervise. Some dogs may be too predatory to safely adjust to a cat. Proceed with caution, and if you find this is the case, never leave them together unsupervised.

If your new cat hides, don’t worry. Keep the well-behaved dog around as much as possible so the cat can get comfortable with their presence. Make sure the cat has access to a private place where they can feel safe that is not accessible to the dog. Allow the pets to adjust in their own time. Be patient, calm, and relaxed. They may become friends, or they may just tolerate each other, either arrangement is okay.

## **Cat to Small Pet Introductions**

Fish, rodents, rabbits, birds, etc. should be protected from curious cats. These animals are natural prey of cats and may become very stressed around your new kitty. Make sure cages and lids are secure and well-maintained; they may need to be in a separate room altogether.

## **Children and Cats**

Begin teaching your child at an early age how to interact with cats both inside and outside your home. Always supervise children and cats, and never leave a child unattended with an animal.

Guidelines for happy cats and children:

- Instruct children to be calm, quiet, and slow-moving when being introduced to the cat.
- Handle the cat gently and tell children not to squeeze or hold too tightly. Most children under the age of 5 cannot hold a cat properly without squeezing too tight. Young children should be taught to sit calmly while you place the cat in their lap. Do not grab tails or ears.

- Leave the cat alone when they are eating, drinking, sleeping, or using the litter box.
- Allow a cat to come to you, and teach kids about cat body language. A swishing tail, ears back, or gentle nips are all signs of a cat becoming irritated or over-stimulated and if ignored, can lead to being scratched or bitten.
- Do not sneak up on, chase, or drag a cat out of hiding. Always allow a cat to escape if they try to run or struggle to get away – let them go.
- Avoid yelling or screaming at a cat.
- Contrary to many photos on the internet, cats do not enjoy being hugged. The side of the face and under the chin or chest are places that most cats enjoy petting.
- Teach your kids about petting consent checks. See more details later in this packet.
- Do not allow children to encourage the cat to bite or run after them. Provide safe toys for the cat and the kids.
- Teach your child to participate in care of the cat to build a relationship between the two and teach responsibility.
- Hand feeding your cat is a great bonding activity for all family members.
- Children may enjoy reading to your cat. This is a calming activity for both parties.

## Cat Behavior

**Scratching:** Scratching is an important, complex, and normal behavior that can be directed to appropriate places. Scratching helps to condition the claws, mark territory, relieve stress, and stretch back and shoulder muscles. Provide your cat with a variety of appropriate scratching options such as a rope scratching post, a log with bark intact, a cardboard scratching pad, etc. A good scratching post will be an appealing texture, tall/long enough to enable a full stretch, stable (to not wobble or topple over), and placed in a good location.

Place the scratching post near a favorite sleeping place as cats love to stretch and scratch after a nap. Reinforce with praise and treats when your cat uses appropriate scratching places. Catnip can be used to attract a cat to an appropriate scratching item.

If you have more than one cat, you'll need more than one scratching post. Place posts in areas where the cats spend the most time.

If your cat has been scratching a piece of furniture, place a scratching post right next to it. You can cover the furniture with a sheet, or if the area is being isolated to just a few spots, place several strips of double-sided tape such as "Sticky Paws" on it. You can also use foil or plastic carpet protectors turned upside down with the little spikes facing outward to discourage cats from walking on or scratching surfaces. Avoid punishing your cat as it is ineffective and will only teach your cat to fear you.

**Declawing:** Once people learn more about declawing, they are usually discouraged from having the surgery and happy to seek out alternative solutions. Declawing is the amputation of the entire last digit of the cat's toes. Declawing includes severing of ligaments and tendons, which is painful. Declawed cats can experience chronic pain and resulting behavior problems.

Cat owners of declawed cats have reported having to change the type of cat litter as some find clay litter painful and may stop covering their stool. Declawing can also cause impaired balance, increased stress because they cannot defend themselves, or injury during a fall because they cannot grip anything. A cat deprived of its claws may turn to its only other defense – its teeth. You may have a cat that does not damage your furniture but is now quick to bite!

Leave your cat with its claws and use the following simple alternatives. Keep claws trimmed – carefully trim the tips off the nails, being careful not to cut the quick (the vein that runs down the nails). Ask your veterinarian to instruct you so you can do this at home, or take your pet to a groomer. Nail sheaths (Soft Paws), little plastic caps that fit over the nails to prevent scratching, are also available for purchase and have been used successfully by many cat owners. Provide and direct your cat to appropriate scratching posts. Reward your cat for using the appropriate place.

**Biting:** Cats use their body language, claws, and teeth to communicate. Biting, even while playing, is natural. Some cats are gentle, and others are rowdy with nipping and biting. Common reasons for cat bites (or scratches) include petting a cat improperly (most cats don't enjoy petting near the tail and on the belly), play or petting gone too far (overstimulation), and new people interacting with the cat.

Paying attention to body language and stopping what you are doing can prevent most bites. Cessation of purring, tail lashing, tail thumping, skin twitching, shifting body position, meowing, and growling are all signals that indicate your cat is reaching its tolerance level. Reward good, calm behaviors with treats, distance, play with toys, etc. Avoid any kind of physical punishment as this will escalate the problem, making the cat more likely to bite due to fear and because petting is associated with punishment.

If your cat becomes too excited and overstimulated during play, leave the room for a short period. Never play with your cat with your hands or feet. Ensure your cat has a variety of enrichment and toys to play with.

If your cat seems to enjoy petting and then suddenly bites or scratches, build a positive association by offering canned food during short petting sessions. Provide your cat vertical spaces such as perches or sturdy boxes to give your cat a sense of security in the home. Let the cat initiate and guide the interaction and perform frequent “consent checks” throughout the session to allow them to disengage and step away from the interaction or continue to engage for more petting.

Be sure to have your cat seen by a veterinarian to rule out a medical issue, especially if the behavior is sudden or unusual for your cat.

**Playing:** Have a variety of safe toys and enrichment items for your cat. These can be purchased or made. There are even apps just for cats (think fish, mice, insects, and butterflies!) that can be downloaded to tablets for lots of kitty entertainment. Playing and hunting desires can be closely related. A mouse toy can be used for a fun game of chase, and allowing your cat to catch the toy mouse will help satisfy hunting desires. Most cats will play with anything that moves!

Avoid playing, wrestling, or rough housing with your hands. Otherwise, it teaches the cat that it’s alright to use claws and teeth on you. This may seem fun and harmless with a small kitten, but will quickly lose its charm as the kitten grows into an adult cat. Part of play may include mock hunting, stalking, ambushing, and pouncing. These can be fun to watch, but be aware that anything that moves may become a target (including you!).

Many behavior issues can be avoided by spending quality time with your cat. If you work or are away all

day, greet your cat affectionately when you arrive home and give them a few minutes of play and attention. Set aside time for longer play periods.

**Sleeping and Relaxing:** Cats love high places to perch and look out from and cozy places to hide and sleep. You can purchase “kitty condos” or leave suitable closets open. Always be sure to check that your cat is not inside before closing anything, especially the dryer!

Letting your cat sleep on your bed and relax on your lap will add pleasure and contentment to their life and yours. However, know that your bedtime may not be the same as your cat’s. They are likely to be active at dawn and dusk. You can help train them to sleep peacefully through the night by playing an hour and a half before bedtime, feeding them after playtime, and ignoring any nighttime behavior (no matter how annoying). Any attention could be seen as a reward, so stay strong in ignoring them no matter how cute or loud that they get.

**Litter Box Training:** Cats typically instinctually know to use a litter box. Here are some tips to help ensure that your cat uses its litter box:

- Place the litter box in a convenient, private, and quiet location. The location should be easily accessible, have a good vantage point, and multiple potential escape routes. For example, from a cat’s perspective, a laundry room or hallway may be too noisy and busy, and a closet or under a sink may not allow for easy access and escape.
- Offer a large, open box (at least 1.5x the size of the cat) with sides that the cat can easily climb.
- Keep the boxes away from heavy traffic areas and the cat’s feeding area. Be certain a shy cat can reach the box without feeling threatened or exposed.
- Scoop the litter box 1-2x daily. Completely change and thoroughly clean the box with mild soap and water every two weeks-one month.
- You may need to experiment with different types of litter until you find the one that is acceptable to your cat.
- Thoroughly clean any accidents with an enzyme-based cleaner.
- In a house with multiple floors, disperse litter boxes throughout the house with one on each floor.
- **Litter Box Issues:** Always contact your veterinarian to rule out a medical issue, such as a urinary tract infection or blockage. After ruling out a potential

medical issue, most litter box issues are the cause of one of these factors (1) litter box setup, (2) conflict between other cats, (3) environmental stressor. Never punish the cat for improper elimination as this will promote fear and can make the problem much worse. Be patient and consistent. Remember that it can take a few weeks for a cat to settle. Find more tips in the “Cat Behavior Library” on the SafeHaven “Behavior & Training” webpage under the “Resources” tab <https://safehavenhumane.org/behavior-training-resources/>.

### (1) Litter box Setup

- Not enough litter boxes. For every cat, there should be one litter box and then one additional box.
- The litter box is not cleaned often enough or not clean enough.
- Not enough or too much litter in the box. Litter should be about two inches deep.
- The cat may not like the type of litter. Most cats prefer unscented, sand-like litter.
- The box has a cover. Or, in some unusual cases, the box needs a cover.
- The location. Sometimes moving the box to a quiet location is the solution. Other times the litter box may be too difficult or cramped to access.
- Placing the box too close to food or water.
- You may try placing another litter box or the food bowl on a previously soiled spot as this may deter the cat.

### (2) Conflict Between Cats

- Marking due to a cat(s) in (or outside of) the home being unaltered.
- Bullying between cats. Try separating and safely reintroducing the cats at their own pace after allowing them to decompress.
- Adding vertical spaces can help cats feel safe.
- Another cat using the litter box. Some cats will not share a litter box, especially at first.

### (3) Environmental Stressors

- Family and household changes, new pets, moving, and even routine changes such as a new work schedule can cause a cat to be stressed and improperly eliminate.
- A child or pet terrorizing the new cat while you are not there.

- Negative association with the litter box. This could be from a loud noise while in the litter box, pain from declawing, a previous medical issue, or many other things.
- Calming products such as Feliway can be used in conjunction with needed changes to reduce stress.

## Cat Body Language

Cats use their bodies to communicate their feelings to us and other cats. Learning to recognize subtle cues and changes in body language will help you better understand and bond with your new cat.

**Ears:** Forward ears indicate an alert, interested, or happy cat. Backward, sideways, or ears pressed flat against the head indicate a frightened, agitated, or angry cat. Swiveling ears show that your cat is attentive, possibly stressed, and listening to every small sound.

**Eyes:** Large, dilated pupils indicate fear and stress.

**Tail:** A cat with their tail held high in a slight candy cane shape is communicating that they are happy, inquisitive, or confident. A puffed tail with the fur standing up is angry or frightened. A slow wagging or flicking tail indicates annoyance, and a faster swishing tail means an agitated and angry cat.

**Purring:** Generally a sign of affection and contentedness, but purring can also indicate injury or pain. Injured or nervous cats may purr to comfort themselves.

**Rubbing:** Cats have scent glands in their chin and body and rub on things to mark their territory – so when they give you head butts and chin rubs they are indicating that they love you by claiming you as their own!

**Kneading:** Often referred to as “making biscuits” because the cat works their paws on a soft surface as if they’re kneading bread dough. This is a behavior leftover from nursing when they massaged their mother’s teats to make milk flow. Cats do this when they are really happy.

## Petting Consent Checks

Practicing consent checks with your cat during each interaction is a great way to avoid bites and scratches.

- Let the cat come to you.

- Offer an extended finger or the back of your hand to the cat. If they move towards, rub into, or smell your hand, try one stroke. Often the cat will direct your extended finger or hand to where they want to be petted (the sides of the chin are common places).
- Pause – take a break for a few seconds and watch the cat’s body language. If they move towards you or rub into you, pet for a few seconds and repeat the process throughout the interaction. If they are neutral or move away slightly, stop petting.

Consent checks allow your pet to choose to engage or end the interaction at their comfort level, building a trusting relationship with mutual respect. You can also try giving your cat tasty treats with petting sessions to create positive associations.

## Health Concerns & Medical Treatment

**Feline Upper Respiratory Infections (URI):** Feline URI is similar to the common cold in humans, is common in stressful environments like a shelter, and can usually be resolved with supportive care and rest. It is caused by a virus and symptoms include sneezing, runny nose or nasal congestion, red/swollen/runny/squinting eyes, coughing or hard swallowing, ulcers on the tongue/lips/nose/roof of the mouth, and lack of appetite/hiding/decreased energy/fever. URI is not contagious to people or other animals but is very contagious between cats. All cats and kittens entering the shelter without a documented vaccination history are immediately vaccinated with a combination vaccine (FVRCP) which helps to provide some protection and offset the severity of the viruses. Occasionally though, a cat will have been exposed to the virus prior to entering the shelter, or in that window of time before the vaccination provides immune protection. Also, cats can have viruses in their systems for life that cause URI and resurface during times of stress. Just like with humans, viral infections aren’t cured by antibiotics, but antibiotics may be used for secondary or bacterial infections.

**Feline Panleukopenia:** Feline panleukopenia (also known as feline distemper) is a rare but infectious viral disease of cats. It attacks susceptible cats of all ages, but young cats and kittens seem to be most vulnerable. It is often fatal. The disease is not related to the virus of distemper of dogs nor does it infect people. It is a close

cousin of the parvovirus of dogs and is itself a parvovirus. Symptoms of panleukopenia include vomiting and diarrhea, lethargy, lack of appetite, and sudden death. The disease strikes suddenly and progresses rapidly. All cats and kittens entering the shelter without a documented vaccination history are immediately vaccinated with a combination vaccine (FVRCP) which provides excellent protection against this virus. Occasionally though, a cat will have been exposed to the virus prior to entering the shelter, or in that window of time before the vaccination provides complete immune protection. If you suspect that your newly adopted cat is showing symptoms of this disease within 10 days of adoption, contact SafeHaven’s medical department immediately at (541) 928-2789 ext. 117.

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV):** FIV typically causes a weakening of the cat’s immune system, making FIV positive cats more prone to getting infections. FIV only affects cats - humans and dogs cannot get FIV. The most common route of infection is a deep bite wound that occur during fighting between an FIV-positive cat and another cat, but it can also be transmitted via blood, in utero, and from the milk of an infected mother cat. As it is rare to spread through casual contact, there is a generally low risk of transmission to other cats in households with stable social structures (ie. no fights between cats resulting in deep bite wounds). It is recommended to keep FIV positive cats indoors, go for regular veterinary exams every six months, maintain effective parasite control (fleas, worms, mites), and keep stress levels low. A blood test can be performed to detect FIV. Kittens under 6 months old can falsely test positive due to antibodies from their mothers, thus it is recommended to retest a kitten who has tested positive after reaching six months of age. There are no proven treatments to cure FIV, but it is important to treat any secondary illnesses. If your cat tests positive for FIV, please consult a veterinarian for more information.

**Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV):** FeLV affects a cat’s immune system and bone marrow, and cannot be transmitted to humans, dogs, or other animals. FeLV-positive cats have weaker immune systems and are more prone to infections. Transmission commonly occurs through close, social contact with infected cats such as sharing food and water dishes, using the same litter box, mutual grooming, and bite wounds. Cats can also be infected from their mothers during pregnancy or

through infected milk. Cats with FeLV typically have a significantly shorter life span, but adult cats can live many healthy years with the illness. Sadly, kittens with the disease often don't fare as well. A blood test can be performed to detect FeLV. Cats with FeLV should not live with other cats without the disease because it spreads through casual contact. There are no proven treatments to cure FeLV, but it is important to treat any secondary illnesses. If your cat tests positive for FeLV, please consult a veterinarian for more information.

## **SafeHaven Medical Care**

While at SafeHaven Humane Society, your adopted cat may have received the following vaccines and/or treatments:

**FVRCP vaccine:** This is a standard vaccine that covers a combination of diseases - Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia. Kittens and some cats may need additional doses administered by your veterinarian over a period of weeks to achieve maximum immunity from diseases. While at the shelter, all cats and kittens receive initial vaccines at admission to help ensure they receive maximum protection against illness and disease. Upon adoption, follow your veterinarian's advice regarding a vaccination and booster schedule for your cat or kitten.

**Deworming:** All cats and kittens are given several doses of medication to eliminate roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms. The deworming schedule varies by age, but most cats and kittens receive Cat Biwormer, a compounded liquid dewormer that contains pyrantel and praziquantel and covers roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms. All kittens receive Ponazuril as well, an antiprotozoal drug that covers coccidia. Adult cats receive Ponazuril if coccidia is present. Certain cats may be given Panacur (Fenbendazole), a broad spectrum dewormer covering roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, and Giardia, if determined to be necessary by SafeHaven's medical staff. Continued treatment and other types of parasite control may be recommended by your veterinarian to treat a wider range of parasites.

**Antibiotics:** When an animal is sick with an upper respiratory infection, we may administer a course of antibiotics. If your adopted cat was sent home with antibiotics or other medication, it is important that you follow the dispensing directions carefully, continue the

medication for the duration, and follow up with the SafeHaven medical team as directed for rechecks and further treatment if needed.

**Flea/Parasite Control:** Many products exist that protect your cat from fleas and parasites. Ask your veterinarian for information about different approaches to flea and parasite control.

**Spaying/Neutering:** Unaltered cats are spayed or neutered at SafeHaven prior to adoption. If your cat or kitten was altered recently, be sure to monitor the surgery site carefully for signs of swelling or discharge. Refer to the aftercare instructions included in your adoption packet for further information regarding alter procedures. All animals adopted from SafeHaven must be altered to prevent domestic animal overpopulation. Altering dogs and cats also keeps them healthier and easier to live with!

**Grooming:** Persian and long-hair cats require ongoing grooming; it is necessary for their health and well-being. Grooming is not just for looks; it prevents painful mats and allows the skin to breathe. Neglecting this type of care can constitute neglect and causes needless suffering. If you are not able to accommodate your cat's grooming needs yourself, ask your veterinarian to recommend a good groomer.

## **Veterinarian Visit**

Some veterinarians in Linn and Benton County offer a free complimentary office visit if you call within 7 days of adopting from SafeHaven. This enables you to establish a relationship with a local veterinary clinic, have a veterinarian examine your cat to see if there are serious medical concerns, and gives you an opportunity to ask questions.

## **Other Resources**

Visit the SafeHaven "Behavior & Training" webpage under the "Resources" tab <https://safehavenhumane.org/behavior-training-resources/> for online training articles, videos, and resources. Feel free to contact us anytime with questions or concerns. Thank you for adopting!