

MEDICAL SUMMARY RECORD

Name: _____ **Age or DOB** _____ **Breed** _____
Altered? Y/N (Per contract, all kittens must be altered by 6 months of age) **Rescue ID #** _____

Initial FVRCP Date _____	FVRCP Date _____ (sticker)	FVRCP Date _____ (sticker)
Rabies Date _____ (sticker)	FelV Date _____ (sticker)	FelV Date _____ (sticker)

Snap Test circle results FeLV +/- _____ FIV +/- _____ Date _____	Flea and tick prevention Name of med _____ Date/s _____ Name of med _____ Date/s _____
Wormer dates Strongid: _____ Drontal: _____ Other: _____	Coccidia treatment Albon dates _____

Treatment notes and additional supplements given: _____

Humane Society Recommended Vaccinations**

• **Monthly Flea & Tick Prevention** - Available online (1-800-Petmeds or PetcareRX and at Petsmart/Petco)

Kittens:

- 6-8 weeks: First puppy shot (FVRCP)
- 11-12 weeks: Second puppy shot (FVRCP)
- 15-16 weeks: Third puppy shot (FVRCP)
- Multiple dewormings should be completed
- 4 months or older: Rabies shot

Adult Cats:

- FVRCP – Yearly
- Rabies - 1-3 years (after first two shots)

**OPH does not conduct blood analysis (unless medically needed for apparent illness).

OPH ADOPTION INFORMATION

Resources

In these documents you will find information pertaining to nutrition, health issues you might have along the way, and the adjustments recommended for your new cat into its new home. OPH has compiled this information to help you and your new cat acclimate as quickly and easily as possible, to a long happy life together! Additionally, several websites have online guides to help you transition your new friend through life's obstacles:

<http://www.animalplanet.com/pets/10-tips-for-bringing-a-new-kitten-home/>, <https://www.petfinder.com/cats>, <http://www.drsofostersmith.com/pic/article.cfm?articleid=1224>, and many others found via Google.

Cat and Kitten Health

Operation Paws for Homes, Inc. does not knowingly adopt out any cat that is sick, injured, or aggressive. There are several ailments, illnesses, and viruses that can take hours, days, and even weeks to display symptoms. It is possible for the stress of a new environment or changes to daily structure to cause symptoms to appear from an unknown and/or undiagnosed health issue. OPH is committed to providing the best care we can for all of the cats we rescue. Basic vaccines, deworming, and parasite treatment are given to all cats that arrive in our care. If a serious health issue arises, we ask that you contact us so we can provide guidance and support. We also encourage you to independently research common ailments. We cannot give you prescription meds and we are not able to reimburse you for vet bills. We also have included a very informative section dedicated to health issues you might encounter with your new cat throughout his life.

Return Policy

You are required to contact OPH if you are unable or unwilling to keep the cat you adopted. By signing the legally binding contract you are required to contact us prior to rehoming your adopted cat on your own, or turning the cat into a shelter. Failure to comply will result in legal action and/or a fine. We take this very seriously as we work hard to save every cat, and promise to provide it with the best life and forever home possible. Please contact us via email if you need to return your cat.

Adoption Costs

Adoption fees associated with adopting an OPH cat allows us to rescue and save many more cats in need. These fees are used for, but are not limited to; vaccinations, deworming, parasite treatment, spay/neuter, surgery, and basic care for each cat. OPH devotes an incredible amount of time and money to every cat we bring into our rescue. The adoption fee is important, as we are committed to providing the best care possible to each cat. This fee also allows us to help support the shelters and other rescue organizations we work with in rural areas. In addition it allows us to afford quarantine, boarding, transportation, and urgent care for cats when necessary. Please understand that all of the money donated by you in the form of the adoption fee is used by OPH to save more pets and provide the best medical care for our future adoptable cats.

Spay/Neuter Policy

If you have adopted a cat from OPH that is not spayed/neutered, you are required to have him/her spayed or neutered. This requirement is a legally binding agreement that you have signed and agreed to, prior to the adoption. OPH provides spay/neuter reimbursement, to encourage you to complete the surgery. Once this surgery has been completed please inform us via email at ophspayneuter@gmail.com. We take this very seriously, so please don't delay to comply with this requirement. This helps us to stop the cat overpopulation problem, and to work towards a great solution together!! We have included a large list of low cost spay/neuter options from several local states to help you.

Reimbursement - Please send your receipt and proof of spay/neuter to: ophspayneuter@gmail.com.

Adopting A New Cat or Kitten

What do I need?

1. Food:

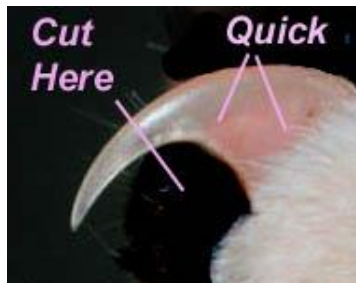
- ✦ Food is the largest predictor to good health and a long life. We recommend exploring healthy cat or kitten food brands. <http://www.petfoodratings.org> gives great reviews and can help you pick out a good healthy diet for your cat. We recommend any 4 or 5 star foods, such as Blue Buffalo, Canidae, Nutrience, or Taste of the Wild.
- ✦ To find a great food you must first look at the ingredient list for each food. If corn, grain, and/or a protein by-product (may be described as chicken and/or meat by-products) are listed as one of the first two ingredients, then the nutrition quality of the food is poor.
- ✦ Wet vs. Dry Food; we encourage you to feed the best food that you can afford. Wet food is best, and can be supplemented with dry food. Feeding only dry food long term can lead to health problems, however, we understand there are financial constraints. To learn more about cat diets, protein needs, and nutritional requirements you can visit this link <http://www.catinfo.org>. Pet food recalls and more information about pet food can also be found at <http://www.truthaboutpetfood.com>.

2. Cat Collar:

- ✦ Collars, with pet and owner identification, are your new cats fastest ticket back to you should they become lost.
- ✦ Whether you want a plain or fancy variety - it is important to pick out a collar that will fit and be comfy for the cat. We recommend a breakaway-type collar incase the cat gets hung up. This allows the cat to escape and prevent injury and/or death.
- ✦ Experts recommend a space between the cat's neck and the collar to be at least 2 fingers wide. The cat collar should never be too loose or too tight. Don't forget to check the collar regularly for fit.

3. Grooming Accessories:

- ✦ Cats take care of the majority of grooming themselves, but they may need a little help from you. A gentle cat brush and nail trimmers are all you will need.
- ✦ Longhaired cats need more brushing than cats with short hair but both appreciate a good brushing weekly. Don't worry, if your cat isn't happy with brushing, he will be fine grooming him/herself.
- ✦ We recommend treats as a distraction with nail trimming, and also recommend beginning young with regular nail trimming to prevent fear. Sometimes having one person hold the cat while the other trims is the easiest.
- ✦ Giving positive reinforcement with treats works very well long term with both brushing and nail trimming. A picture is attached to show where to trim the cat nail to prevent trimming the nail too short into the quick or cuticle. If you trim the nail too short it will cause pain for the cat and may bleed. Cornstarch can help stop a nail from bleeding if it continues to bleed for a period of time. If there is severe bleeding contact your vet immediately.
- ✦ If your cat does not allow for nail trims after several tries or you feel it is too stressful for them, you may want to try Soft Claws. Soft Claws are plastic caps that adhere to the claws and last about six weeks



4. Cat Bed:

- ✦ A comfy place for your kitty to curl up in will make him/her very happy. Cats make themselves comfortable pretty much anywhere. If you are unable to purchase a bed easily, a bed can be made with a cardboard box and a little blanket inside.

5. Scratching post/pad:

- ✦ We recommend that you get a small scratching post to deter your cat from scratching the furniture and carpets. There are several cheap options you can find at your local pet store or from Walmart, however some of the best deals can be found online at <http://www.Chewy.com> or <http://www.Amazon.com>. Many are under \$10.

6. Cat Toys:

- ✦ Toys and regular playtime provide your cat with a stimulating environment. Play gives them an outlet for their energy and an opportunity to satisfy their instinctual hunting drive. It also gives you a chance to bond with your cat. Many cat toys can be at your house already or can be made easy.

For example:

- ✦ Milk jug caps. (If you have dogs these are a bad idea)
- ✦ Large Craft Pom-Poms and Pipe Cleaners are a cat favorite and cheap.
- ✦ Round plastic shower curtain rings.
- ✦ Ping-Pong balls and plastic practice golf balls with holes. Try putting one in a dry bathtub. For many cats, the captive ball is much more fun than one that escapes under the sofa.
- ✦ Paper bags with any handles removed. Paper bags are good for pouncing, hiding, and interactive play.
- ✦ Cardboard boxes. Fasten some together and cut out doors and windows to make a fun cat condo.
- ✦ You may even enjoy making your own toys, such as felt mice stuffed with catnip.
- ✦ ****If you have dogs, be mindful of toy choices as dogs can easily swallow cat toys.****

7. Litter Box:

- ✦ You will need at least one basic litter box. Some cats are picky about their litter. You can try to use the same litter the cat was using previously at their foster home.

8. Flea and Tick Prevention:

- ✦ Ensure your new cat receives monthly flea/tick prevention. This is imperative if your cat spends any time outside. You can get a prescription for Revolution or another recommended treatment from your vet, and purchase it at pet stores or online at PetCareRx, Entirely Pets, or 1-800-Pet-Meds.

Please remember that there will be an adjustment period for any new four-legged family member!! Kittens seem to adjust the quickest. Older cats in particular can take a few weeks to feel at home in their new environment. Give them time to adjust to your home with a safe quiet space to escape if they need it.



Misty and Steele at their first vet visit.

Toxic Foods and Items to Avoid

Toxic Foods - Common **DEADLY** household foods or items that cats should not be given or allowed to ingest.

Item

- Alcohol
- Caffeine (coffee, soda, tea)
- Chives
- Chocolate
- Garlic
- Grapes
- Onions
- Raisins
- Xylitol (found in sugarless gums, candies, toothpastes)
- Yeast dough
- Human Medicines
- Anything moldy or any fungus (mushrooms)
- Indoor and Outdoor Plants
 - ✿ Aloe
 - ✿ Azalea
 - ✿ Chrysanthemum
 - ✿ Lily
 - ✿ Marijuana
 - ✿ Mistletoe
 - ✿ Poinsettia
 - ✿ Rhododendron
 - ✿ Tulip
- Insecticides and Chemicals
 - ✿ Antifreeze
 - ✿ Bleach
 - ✿ Detergents
 - ✿ De-icing salts (which pets may walk through, then lick from their pads)
 - ✿ Dog flea and tick medication (pills, collars, sprays, shampoos) ** Many dog preventatives are Toxic and can kill cats. **
 - ✿ Fertilizers
 - ✿ Herbicides
 - ✿ Insect and rodent bait

Notes and Comments

Some human over-the-counter and prescription medicines pose serious threats to cats, so keep them in a place he can't get into, including:

Antidepressants, Cancer medicines, Cold medicines, Diet pills, Pain relievers (acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen), Vitamins, and other supplements. You may have heard or read that some common medicines work for people and cats. Never give your pet any pills or medication without first talking to your vet. It is very easy to overdose a cat because their doses are tens of times smaller and many medications are toxic, and will kill cats within hours.

Other dangerous household items are:

- Chicken bones
- Dental floss, yarn, or string
- Holiday decorations, including lights and tinsel
- Toys with small or movable parts

**** This list is not inclusive. When in doubt contact a vet.**

The list was created from the following websites:

1. Another great resource: <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/>.
2. Please visit their site for more complete information on toxic foods for dogs.



OPERATION PAWS FOR HOMES

Operation Paws for Homes **Guide for New Arrivals**

We have a new cat!! Now what?!

Bringing home a new cat is exciting, but there are important things to remember. **Cats need time to adjust to new environments just like humans!** Expect your cat to need a few days to adjust. Additionally, you **MUST** take your cat to the vet within two weeks of adopting. This ensures that your vet is able to look over the cat's records and can recommend any additional vaccines if needed.

Be prepared when bringing a new pet into your home. Cats are particularly sensitive to new surroundings and some may hide under a bed or in a closet for days or even weeks. Many cats are fearful when introduced to their new home; being moved from a small enclosure to an apartment or house is a big change. Your home also has different smells and noises than the shelter and the foster home where your cat lived before. Initially, confine your new cat to one room. Your bedroom or bathroom often is a good option. Make sure that you provide your new cat with food, water, and a litter box. Additionally, make sure that you regularly spend time in this room with your new kitty. This gives your cat a time to bond with you and also so that she is not alone.

Provide your new kitty with multiple hiding places. A cardboard box with holes cut in both sides (so she can go in and out each side) and a blanket placed in the bottom, can be a great hiding place. Be certain to provide her with hiding places around the house. When he/she is in her hiding place, do not disturb her. Her hiding place should be her safe space, where she can have privacy if desired.

Place a scratching post or pad, and a cat tree in her room. Place her scent on the cat tree by gently stroking her cheeks with a towel, and then rubbing the scratching post with the towel. This will transfer her scent onto the scratching post, thereby increasing the likelihood that she will use it.

Let your cat adjust to the room, and to you. Do not force her to stay near you if you wish to pet her. Instead, coax her to you by playing with an interactive toy or staying near her food bowl while she is eating. Cat treats are also great for gaining trust with your new kitty. Once she realizes that this new stranger (you) can provide all the same good things that her previous owner did (and maybe even more!), she will warm quickly to you and accept your attention.

Once your cat is comfortable walking around and living in the initial smaller room, expand her access to the entire house. For some cats, it may take several weeks before they are comfortable in their room. For some it might only take a day or two. For some cats change of any sort can be very overwhelming. It will take time but once they seem comfortable in their room they can be allowed access to the whole house.

Indoor Vs. Outdoor

A big decision for cat owners is to keep their new cat strictly indoors or letting them go outdoors as well. There are many risk factors that can shorten the life of your kitty if they are allowed to roam freely, outdoors. He/she could be hit by a car, poisoned, be subjected to extreme heat and freezing cold, attacked by another animal, or infected with a deadly virus. Many cats enjoy being outdoors and miss the natural stimulation of being outdoors.

There are many ways to allow your cat to enjoy the outdoors without the risks associated with actually being outdoors. Window perches are great because your kitty can sit in the sun and watch the wildlife. You can hang birdfeeders outside your window for the cat to watch as well. Adding thick safe screens to your windows can allow them to smell the outside world and enjoy it while still being safe inside. You can train your kitty to walk with a harness and leash. If you have an enclosed porch you can also allow your kitty out in nice weather. If you have a fenced backyard there are even cat containment systems you can add to your tall fence to keep your cat in your backyard. There are many other outdoor enclosure options you can find online.

Additional Guidance:

<https://www.petfinder.com/cats/bringing-a-cat-home/tips-for-first-30-days-cat/>

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=1+2137&aid=2926>

Scratching Tips:

There are many reasons a cat uses its claws to scratch.

- ✿ Shedding the old nail and keeping the new one clean and sharp.
- ✿ Keeping its legs and shoulders tone.
- ✿ Stretching
- ✿ Marking their territory
- ✿ Reducing stress

****There are many items you can train your kitty to use instead of your furniture.****

Provide different scratching options for your cat. Scratching posts can be made of cardboard, wood, or carpeting. They can be vertical or horizontal. Cat usually like tall posts so they can climb and stretch. Make your cat curious about the scratching areas by sprinkling catnip near them or hanging toys on them. You can even make your own scratching posts.

Discourage scratching in inappropriate places by covering things with plastic, double sided tape, or tinfoil. Clip your cat's nails regularly. You can also use a product called Soft Claws. Soft Claws are plastic caps that adhere to the claws and last about six weeks.

<http://softclaws.com/>

<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2011/02/15/preventing-pet-cat-scratching.aspx>

<http://www.catscratching.com/>

<http://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/cat-scratching#1>

Litter Box Training Tips

Cats naturally like to bury their waste. They also like their litter boxes to be in a quiet private area like a bathroom or a closet. Place your kitty's litter box in an easily accessible area but make sure to keep it out of high traffic areas. Your cat will also prefer for their box to be in a different location away from their food and water. Get a large enough box for your kitty, or kitties, and fill it with 2-4 inches of litter and scoop it regularly at least every 3-4 days. Cats do not like using a dirty litter box, and will sometimes resort to going someplace else if their box is too dirty.

More information on litter box training can be found at this link.

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=1+2137&aid=3288>

Exercise Tips

Some cats are very active by nature. Others may require special treats or cat toys to spark that playful spirit. Here are a few ideas to get your cat moving.

1. Leave out paper bags, bottle caps, and cardboard boxes to inspire play. (avoid plastic bags)
2. Provide fresh catnip in areas the cat likes to rest.
3. Encourage your cat to chase toys, balls, sticks with feathers, or laser pointers. Be careful not to shine the pointer in your pet's eyes, or anyone else's. It can cause permanent damage.
4. Inspire climbing with a cat tree or cat condo. <http://www.Wayfair.com> offers some HUGE cat trees at a decent price (mansion cat trees).
5. Provide a scratching post or pad.
6. Encourage play with your other pets. You may even want to consider adopting another cat as a playmate.
7. Train your cat to perform tricks for low-calorie treats. For example, teach your cat to run to you from across the house, or climb up her cat tree when you shake the box or bag of treats.

8. Get your cat a food puzzle. Specially designed cat toys require your cat to work to remove treats from inside.

9. Cats love all ball tracks. A great recommendation is the Petstages Tower of Tracks Cat Toy (10-inch) which is \$13.99 at <http://www.Chewy.com>.



Pet stages tower →



Craft PomPoms →

Be sure to choose toys for your cat carefully, avoiding toys with strings or small pieces that your cat may try to swallow. If feathers fall off toys throw the feathers away. Cats will sometimes try to eat these feathers. Some cats also like to chew on plastic bags, so keep those out of reach. Don't leave small toys or toys that can rip apart out for cats to play with while you are not around. Cats also will eat hair 'Scrunchies'. Be mindful if you have a dog about small toys they could ingest.

Worms

We deworm all cats and kittens immediately when they enter the rescue but sometimes it is not enough. We suggest getting a fecal test done at your first vet visit, to be sure your kitty is worm free. We will explain why more in the parasite section.

Medical Considerations

Medical expenses for a cat can be costly. If there are extenuating medical factors for your cat or if your cat is special needs, it will be noted in the cat's adoption folder. We will always inform you before adoption of any special medical needs a cat might have that would be outside of what would be considered 'normal cat veterinary care'. We understand that these special needs cats might cost more and we are upfront about the health issues known to us at the time of adoption.

As a new owner you must consider there is always a potential risk for health issues to appear after adoption that were unknown to us, prior to the adoption. As an adopter you must understand that OPH cannot help if serious medical conditions arise. If there is a severe/serious illness that has gone undetected please contact OPH to let us know. We hope that every cat goes to his/her forever home without any hidden health issues, but we want you as an adopter to know that there is a rare possibility that there could be an underlying health condition that has gone undiagnosed. It is your responsibility, as the new pet owner, to provide all the needed vet care for your new pet. It is also the responsibility of the new owner to provide additional medical attention and/or maintenance vaccinations if/as necessary. Preventative care required including teeth cleaning, nail trimming, flea and tick preventative, and medications are also the responsibility of the new owner. For more information on how to make these costs more affordable, please read the information on pet insurance covered in this guide. There are also low cost vaccination options listed by State in this packet.

Expected costs immediately following adoption:

- Vet Visit – Office fees on average range between \$35 - \$75
- Flea preventative for 1 year – Required under OPH Contract (prescription from vet will be needed)
- Fecal examination to ensure there are no residual intestinal parasites. (Consult with your vet to see if recommended).
- Dewormer – You will likely need to complete another follow up with dewormer, to ensure that there are no longer intestinal parasites. This will likely follow a fecal examination presenting with intestinal parasites.
- Booster shots and non-booster shots.
- Activation of our microchip – the microchip will help identify your cat if he/she goes missing or gets loose outside of the home.

Dogs – Advice on how to Introduce a Dog to your Cat!

Dogs and cats need to be introduced slowly. It will take time to get everyone to get along. DO NOT force the introduction; it may result in the animals never getting along, or the cat fearing the dog. Some dogs display an instinctual prey drive, and may initially try to chase the cat. To prevent this introduce the cat and dog to each other slowly (allow them to smell each other from under the door in their temporary small room), and use your best judgment.

Here is a great article pertaining to introducing your dog to your new cat-
<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/cat-behavior/introducing-your-cat-new-dog>

Smart Shopping!

There are great deals out there – so take a look at these websites and save some cash:

- Entirely Pets
- 1-800-Petmeds
- PetCareRx
- Jeffers Pet Supply
- www.budgetpetcare.com

Coupons are available on the Internet - retailmenot.com, coupon cabin, etc.!



Major Tom the cat, trying to figure out the 'cone of shame' on his sister Grace.

Pet Insurance

Pet Insurance is a great way to help protect the health of your pet long term, and help save money if any emergency medical situations arise. Vet bills can build fast, and pet insurance can make the burden of the bills much easier to manage.

There are an estimated 78 million 'fur children' in the United States. An average taken from 50,000 families with pets reported that they spent approximately \$250 for a single routine vet visit. An average taken from 25,000 families with pets reported that an emergency vet visit averaged \$650 a day. Emergency Veterinary care can sometimes be necessary to save your pet's life, and it is rarely cheap. Veterinary Medical expenses without insurance, especially those that are not planned for, can become overwhelming, stressful, and may ultimately prevent you from getting the care your animal may need to survive.

In 2009, only 5 million pets in the US were covered by veterinary medical insurance. In 2011 the number of pets insured jumped to nearly 12 million. Annually the number of insured pets has continued to increase by roughly 20% each year! Like insurance for your family, it can be difficult to navigate, difficult to understand, and downright frustrating.

There are companies that ask for monthly payments ranging between an average of \$5.00 and \$100.00. Different Pet Insurance companies offer several different health plans, and each health plan will require a different monthly payment. These different health plans will each offer different services and benefits. The plans that offer the lowest monthly payments typically cover only basic veterinary care. Examples of this type of insurance plan could include annual vet exams or Rabies vaccinations. These plans do not cover much when it comes to expenses outside of the normal annual vet visit or vaccinations. Plans that tend to have the highest monthly payments will cover regular annual expenses as well as a large portion of emergency veterinary care and/or specialty Vet care (like a Veterinary Neurologist). An example of this might include a cat getting very sick and needing ultrasounds and/or x-rays to determine the cause. This cat might also need to spend several days at the vet to be monitored around the clock. A situation like this without insurance can quickly average \$2500. The more expensive insurance plan might cover most of the medical expenses including ultrasounds, surgeries, and other specialty Veterinary care. The right option for your pet is dependent on what your budget allows and also what you feel would be the best option for your pet.

An important thing to consider when deciding if you want to get insurance on your pet, is the fact that many plans do not cover preexisting conditions. As an example; you have just brought home your new pet and he/she seems incredibly healthy, and you have decided not to get insurance. 18 months later, when you go to

the vet, it is discovered that they need lifelong specialty care such as diabetes or seizure management. Typically if you decide to get insurance after a diagnosis, the insurance plan will not cover any expenses relating to these recent diagnoses. These medical conditions are considered preexisting to when you got your insurance plan on your pet, and insurance plans typically do not cover preexisting conditions. Plans also typically have a period of time that must pass before they become active.

OPH doesn't advocate for any one company, but many fosters and adopters with OPH find that having pet insurance makes paying for the planned and unplanned veterinary expenses much more manageable. Inquire about different plans with different companies, and consider something that financially fits your budget. You might never know when an emergency will happen, but you will be thankful that you planned ahead. You will be relieved that you provided yourself with the financial means to get your pet the vet care that it needed, that you otherwise might not be able to afford without pet insurance.

We encourage you to consider the purchase of an insurance policy that fits your budget. One that can help with annual planned vet expenses, as well as help cover those unplanned emergency visits that will likely happen when you least expect them. Having the knowledge that you will, and can provide your cat with vet care whenever he/she needs it, makes owning a cat that much more enjoyable!

You can compare the offerings of various companies at Reviews.com - <http://www.reviews.com/pet-insurance/>

Different Insurance Providers to consider:

- Embrace - <http://www.embracepetinsurance.com/>
- PetFirst – www.petfirst.com
- VPI Pet Insurance – www.petinsurance.com
- 24 Pet Watch – www.24petwatch.com
- ASPCA Pet Insurance – www.aspcapetinsurance.com
- Trupanion – www.trupanion.com

Operation Paws for Homes, Inc. Spay & Neuter Clinics & Low Cost Options for Vet Care

Virginia

Anicira Veterinary Center (formally Potomac Spay and Neuter Clinic)

9975 Pennsylvania Avenue
Manassas, VA 20110
Phone: 571-208-0199

Email: manassas@anicira.org
<http://www.manassas.anicira.org>

*no income or residency requirements

Anicira Veterinary Center

1992 Medical Avenue
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Phone: 540-437-1980

Email: harrisonburg@anicira.org
<http://www.harrisonburg.anicira.org>

**no income or residency requirements

Animal Welfare League of Arlington

2650 South Arlington Mill Drive
Arlington, VA 22206
Phone: 703-931-9241

Email: mail@awla.org

<http://www.awla.org/services>

**They offer low-cost programs for people with a household income below \$60,000

Spay Inc.

P.O. Box 100220
Arlington, VA 22210
Phone: 703-522-7920

Email: spayrequest01@spay.org
www.spay.org

**They offer discounted spay/neuter surgeries through a network of participating animal hospitals in Northern Virginia

Fauquier Spay Neuter Clinic

9350 Rogues Road
Midland, VA 22728
Phone: 540-788-9000

Email: fspca@fauquierspca.com
www.fauquierspca.com

**They offer nail trimming, and low cost spay/neuter services for Fauquier county and neighboring counties. Call for details.

Virginia Kincheloe Spay/Neuter Clinic

452 TV Drive
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
Phone: 540-507-7461

*They do not have an active website but current fees and services can be found on their facebook page.

Facebook Page Document: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/virginia-kincheloe-spay-neuter-clinic/price-list/1512285962132210/>

Helping Hands

1605 Rhoadmiller Street
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: 804-355-3500

Email: info@affordablepetsurgery.com
<http://www.helpinghandsvetva.com>

**They offer high quality affordable surgery and dental care. Dental cleanings run around \$260.

Friends of Animals

Phone: 1-800-321-7387

www.friendsofanimals.org

**spay/neuter certificates to use at participating vet hospitals. You can order the certificate online or call the phone number to get more information and an application by mail.

You can also find many other humane societies offering spay/neuter services at

www.spayva.org

Maryland

Animal Advocates of Howard County

P.O. Box 1403
Ellicott City, MD 21041
Phone: 410-880-2488

Email: advocates@hotmail.com
<http://www.animal-advocates.org>

**They offer free spay/neuter with income requirements and discounts to all others. No residency requirements.

Fredrick County Humane Society

Physical Address:
550 Highland Street
Suite 200
Frederick, MD 21701

Phone: 301-694-8300

Email: info@fchs.org

www.fchs.org

**Emergency Medical Assistance for families whose pets require expensive lifesaving treatment. FCHS offers reduced spay/neuter services for low-income families. Offer a 'Quick Fix' where there is a \$25 neuter and only \$35 spay (this is only offered twice per year). They also offer a senior resident program to help with annual pet costs. They offer a voucher program and also a military assistance program. Must live within Fredrick County Maryland. Some programs are income dependent.

Baltimore County Humane Society

1601 Nicodemus Road
Reisterstown, MD 21136

Phone: 410-833-8848

Email (for spay/neuter services) fixmypet@bmorehumane.org

www.bmorehumane.org

**They offer several services including vaccinations, diagnostic services, spay-neuter services, and many regular vet services at a discount price. For members of the local community that struggle with low income.

Maryland SPCA

3300 Falls Road
Baltimore, MD 21211

Phone: 410-235-8826

<http://www.mdspca.org/programs/spay-neuter>

**They offer Spay neuter programs. You must be a Baltimore city resident, and meet certain criteria.

Humane Society of Prince Georges County/SPCA

Phone: 301-262-5625

Email: pgspcavol@gmail.com

www.pgspca.org

**They offer vaccinations, free spay/neuter, and low cost spay/neuter. For more information visit their webpage.

Humane Society of Charles County

71 Industrial Park Drive
P.O.Box 1015

Waldorf, MD 20604

Phone: 301-645-8181

www.humanesocietyvcc.org

**They offer spay/neuter services, healthy pet clinics, and Rabies clinics.

Waldorf Well Pet Clinic

8500 Bensville Road
Waldorf, MD 20603

Phone: 301-885-0263

**They offer very affordable spay and neuter services with pain meds. Other vet services and vaccinations are available on surgery day. Call to make an appointment. (These services are offered through the last chance animal rescue of Maryland.) Please double check location of veterinary office.

Paw Prints Animal Hospital

8500 Bensville Road
Waldorf, MD 20603

Phone: 301-885-0263

**They offer full service Veterinary Exams. Call to make an appointment. (These services are offered through the last chance animal rescue of Maryland.) Please double check location of veterinary office.

The Spay Spot

3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, MD

Phone: 301-254-8151

www.thespayspot.org

**They offer low cost, high volume, high quality spay/neuter clinic.

Maryland

Cont.

Spay Now

125 Pullman Crossing
Suite 101
Grasonville, MD 21638
Phone: 410-827-6464
www.spaynow.com

**They offer low cost high quality spay/neuter surgery clinics. They also offer affordable vaccinations. Serves Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Many different spay/neuter services can be found at this link
http://mda.maryland.gov/spay_neuter_program/Pages/Free-Spay-and-Neuter-Services.aspx

Friends of Animals

Phone: 1-800-321-7387
www.friendsofanimals.org

**They offer spay/neuter certificates to use at participating vet hospitals. You can order the certificate online or call the phone number to get more information and an application by mail.

District of Columbia

Humane Rescue Alliance

www.humanerescuealliance.org
Phone: 202-726-2273

Email: medicalcenter@humanerescuealliance.org

**They offer affordable low-cost vaccinations. They offer discounted full service care (For income-qualifying families (making less than \$55,000 a year and have photo ID). They also have a pet food bank for families during difficult times.

Metro Ferals

Phone: 703-528-7782
P.O. Box 7138
Arlington, VA 22207
www.metroferals.org

**They offer low cost, first come first serve spay/neuter clinic ran by volunteers.

Spay Inc.

Many spay Neuter services are listed at the link below
<http://www.spay.org/links.html>

Friends of Animals

Phone: 1-800-321-7387
www.friendsofanimals.org

**They offer spay/neuter certificates to use at participating vet hospitals. You can order the certificate online or call the phone number to get more information and an application by mail.

Pennsylvania

Spay Neuter Assistance Program Inc. (S.N.A.P.)

P.O. Box 126702
Harrisburg, PA 17112
Phone: 717-732-5377
Email: snapofpa@hotmail.com
www.snapofpa.org

**They offer affordable alternatives for spay/neuter to help bring and end to cat/dog overpopulation

The Nobody's Cats Foundation

3909 Hartzdale Dr.
Suite 905
Camp Hill, PA 17011
Phone: 855-867-4228
Email: appointments@nobodyscats.org
www.nobodyscats.org

**Trap Neuter Return for feral cats

Central Pennsylvania Animal Alliance

180 Walden Way
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
Email: info@cpaa.info
<http://www.cpaa.info>

Pennsylvania

Cont.

SPCA of York County
3159 Susquehanna Trail North
York, PA 17406
Phone: 717-764-6109

** They offer several different services including spay/neuter services.

Greys and Strays LLC
2686 S Pine Grove St
Jonestown, PA 17038
Phone: 717-304-9987

Email: greysandstrays@comcast.net
www.greysandstrays.com

**They offer spay/neuter and vaccination clinics.

Adams County SPCA
11 Goldenville Rd.
Gettysburg, PA
Phone: 717-334-8876

www.adamscountyspca.org

**They offer low cost spay/neuter services.

Friends of Animals
Phone: 1-800-321-7387

www.friendsofanimals.org

**They offer spay/neuter certificates to use at participating vet hospitals. You can order the certificate online or call the phone number to get more information and an application by mail.

Humane Society of Harrisburg area
7790 Grayson Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111
Phone: 717-564-3320

Email: frontdesk@humanesocietyvhbg.org
www.humanesocietyvhbg.org

**They offer veterinary support resources, and low cost voucher clinics.

Organization for Responsible Care of Animals
401 East Orange St
Landcaster, PA 17602
Phone: 717-397-8922

Email: orca.central@yahoo.com
www.orcarecue.org

**They offer low cost spay/neuter program.

Pet Pantry of Lancaster County
Phone: 717-983-8878

Email: petpantryoflanaster@gmail.com
www.petpantrylc.org

** They help families in need through a pet food bank and low cost spay/neuter/vaccination program.

Steelton Community Cats
Phone: 717-877-4146

** They offer spay/neuter program services.

LOW COST VACCINATIONS

You can visit your local Petco to inquire about their Vetco program. They offer low cost vaccination packages several times a month.

You can also visit their webpage at <https://www.vetcoclinics.com>

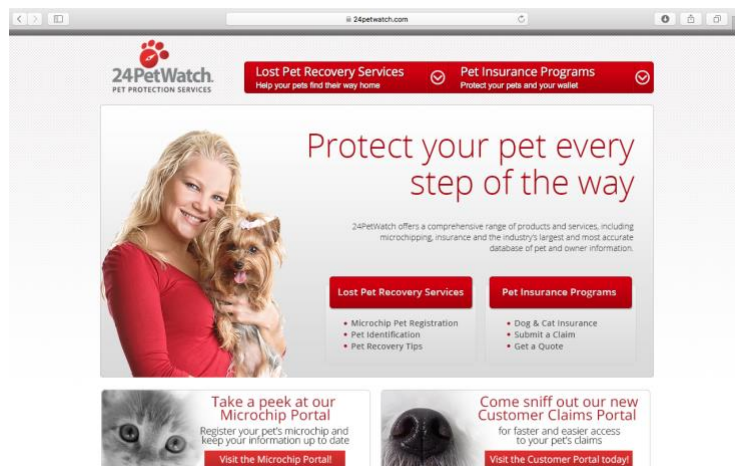


REGISTERING YOUR CAT'S MICRO CHIP

To register your pet's microchip number, please follow the directions listed below. There are two microchip companies that are used by OPH shelter partners. Please review your records to find the company you will need to register with. Once you locate the microchip number and the company name, follow the directions below.

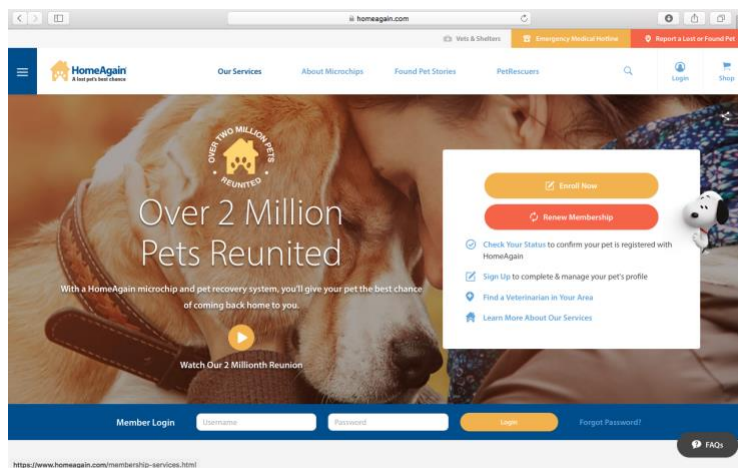
24 Pet Watch – The microchip numbers start with 0A

- Log into <http://www.24petwatch.com>
- Select USA, and the State you reside in.
- Select 'Lost Pet Recovery Services' option and then select 'change of ownership'.
- You will click on the 'ownership transfer form' and print this form out.
- Once printed please complete the form – you will need to send a copy of your adoption contract in with this form. (Please write the cat's ID number on the contract near the name)
- Fees are \$21.95/ year or \$59.95/ lifetime.



Home Again - The microchip will have 15 numerals (no letters)

- Log into <http://www.Homeagain.com>
- Select 'Enroll Now'.
- Enter your email address and microchip number for your pet.
- Complete the online form with a \$17.95/year payment.



If your OPH adopted cat ever goes missing, please contact OPH. Our volunteers and fosters have helped many families find lost pets. Many shelters will also contact us if an OPH pet has been located.

Common intestinal parasites in cats

****Why it is important to get a fecal exam even if you believe your cat/kitten is healthy****

There are several types of intestinal parasites that a cat or kitten can become infected with throughout their lifetime. In this section we will discuss several of the common types, and species, of parasites that you may encounter during your cats lifetime.

Worms

There are several types of worms that the common domesticated cat is infected with. These types of worms are classified as tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms.

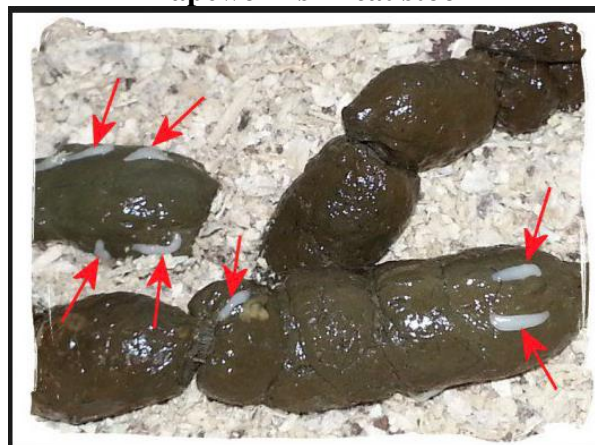
Tapeworms

Tapeworms are flat worms that are segmented. They consist of a head, neck, and then a number of segments. The head usually has suckers or muscular grooves that enable the tapeworm to attach itself to the animal's intestine.

Each tapeworm segment has its own reproductive organs. New segments are continually formed in the neck region of the worm while those at the end of the tapeworm are cast off as they mature. These mature segments contain large numbers of eggs, which are often grouped into packets. The segments may often be seen near the anus of the cat or dog. These segments may move if recently passed, or if dried, they look like grains of uncooked rice or cucumber seeds. Tapeworm infections are usually diagnosed by finding these segments on the animal.

Tapeworms of cats and dogs all have life cycles that include an intermediate host. These hosts include fleas, fish, and domesticated animals such as sheep and pigs. All of the adult forms of these tapeworms live in the cat or dog's digestive system. It is interesting that tapeworms have no digestive systems themselves, but absorb nutrients through their skin.

Tapeworms in cat stool



The most common species of tapeworms that infect cats are;

Dipylidium caninum – the adult for of this worm lives in dogs, cats, fox, and occasionally humans. It is found throughout the world. Fleas and lice serve as an intermediate host. These worms live in the small intestine.

Segments, full of eggs, are passed in the feces. When warm, the segments of worms look active, but once they dry they crack and release the eggs inside. When a louse or flea larvae ingests the egg it develops into an immature form of the worm in the insect. When a cat or dog then ingests the insect the immature form develops into an adult again, and the life cycle is complete.

Infections with this species of worm are usually noticed in your pet's feces. It will look like small pieces of white rice. When a cat is severely infected he/she will suffer from abdominal pain, and may act very nervous. You may also witness your cat vomiting. Sometimes a cat infected will drag his rear on the floor because it (his bum) is itchy and irritated. If your cat has fleas it is more than likely infected with this species of worm. This species can grow to a length of 20 inches.

Taenia taeniaeformis – It is uncommon to see evidence of this worm in your cat, based on his behavior. The main symptom will be severe itching around the anal region, and small white pieces of the worm in the cat's feces. The intermediate hosts for this species of tapeworm are rodents. If your cat ingests a rodent, there is a high probability that this parasite will infect your cat. These worms can grow to be over 6 feet long. The most common tapeworms from the genus *Taenia* are listed in the table below. Only one *Taenia* species is known to infect cats.

Latin Name	Common Name	Definitive Host	Intermediate Host
<i>T. saginata</i>	Unarmed tapeworm; beef tapeworm	Man	Cattle
<i>T. solium</i>	Armed tapeworm; pork bladderworm	Man	Pig
<i>T. hydatigena</i>	Thin-necked bladderworm	Dog, Bear	Sheep, goat, cattle, pig, deer
<i>T. krabbei</i>		Dog	Reindeer
<i>T. multiceps</i> (Also known as <i>Multiceps multiceps</i>)		Dog	Sheep
<i>T. ovis</i>		Dog	Sheep, goat
<i>T. pisiformis</i>		Dog	Rabbit, rodent
<i>T. serialis</i> (Also known as <i>Multiceps serialis</i>)	Bladderworm	Dog	Rabbit, hare
<i>T. taeniaeformis</i>	Feline tapeworm	Cat	Rodent

Echinococcus multilocularis – Most infections with this worm will not show symptoms, even when the infection is severe. The intermediate hosts are small rodents such as shrews and voles. This is a relatively rare tapeworm in North America.

Diphyllobothrium latum – There are rarely any symptoms with this species of tapeworm. The intermediate hosts are minnows and other small fish. This tapeworm is usually spotted in the feces during a fecal exam at the vet.

Spirometra masonoides – There are typically no symptoms with this type of tapeworm. However in severe cases the cat might have weight loss, irritability, and changes in appetite. An infection is typically only found when a fecal examination is done at your local veterinarian.

Roundworms

There are two types of roundworm that infect cats; *Toxascaris leonine*, and *Toxocara cati*. They have the appearance of spaghetti and are a white or off-white color. Both have a specific transport host. Roundworms are a very common parasite in dogs and cats. Roundworms, unlike most tapeworms, can infect humans, so great care must be taken to wash hands when around an infected animal. Roundworms live in the small intestine and pass their eggs in their feces. There can be millions of eggs a day passed by a single animal a day.

In the intestine, roundworms absorb nutrients from what the animal eats. It can interfere with digestion and can damage the lining of the intestine, which won't allow the cat to get the nutrients it needs from the food it eats. Mild infections of roundworms typically don't show signs, but severe infections have several symptoms. These symptoms include dull hair coat, pot bellied appearance, and they may have a thin appearance. They may also become anemic and vomit, have diarrhea, and/or constipation. Some animals may cough and in young animals the worms can cause pneumonia.

These worms are typically diagnosed when seen in the feces or vomit. They can also be detected on a routine fecal exam. For roundworms they use a special test called a 'fecal float test'.

Roundworms as seen in cat stool



*Usually by the time you see roundworms in vomit or stool they are severely infected.

Species of Roundworms found in Cats and Dogs

Roundworm	Primary Host	Transport Host
<i>Toxascaris leonina</i>	Dog, cat, fox, and other wild carnivores	Small rodents
<i>Toxocara canis</i>	Dog, fox	Small rodents
<i>Toxocara cati</i>	Cat	Small rodents, beetles, earthworms

Toxascaris leonine - The adult female worm will lay eggs in the small intestine, which are passed in the feces. The eggs will become infective after remaining in the environment for 3-6 days. Animals contract this worm when they ingest something contaminated with infected feces. Rodents act as an intermediate host. A cat can also become infected after eating a rodent infected with this worm.

Toxocara cati – This species of roundworm is the most common roundworm in cats. Infection will include one of the following ways; ingestion of the eggs, ingestion of a transport host (small rodent, beetle, or earthworm), and kittens can even become infected by drinking milk from their infected mother. It only takes 4 weeks for a worm to develop into an adult, from an egg. Lets go into more detail about how the infection happens:

Ingestion of eggs: After a cat ingests eggs from the environment, they hatch and the larvae enter the wall of the small intestine. The larvae then migrate into the circulatory system (blood). The larvae will then go to either the respiratory system or other organs or tissue in the body. The worms can even encyst (become walled off and inactive in the tissue). They can remain encysted in tissue for months or years. This type of infection in the tissues is usually seen in older cats. Kittens are typically infected through their mother’s milk when nursing. Once ingesting the worms from their mother’s milk the worms move to the small intestine. The worms then move into the circulation system and then to the respiratory system. The larval worms will burrow through the lungs and the kittens will typically cough them up and swallow them. The worms will then mature in the intestines and lay eggs that will pass in the feces. Any egg from this species must remain in the environment 10-14 days before they become infective. A cat can also become infected from eating a transport host such as an earthworm, beetle, or rodent.

To treat roundworms takes a bit of time because most wormers only kill the adult worms in the intestine and not the larval worms in the blood/circulation. Most wormers are given again, 2-4 weeks after the first treatment. By the time of the second dose most of the larval worms have came back to the intestine and can be killed by the wormer.

Methods of infection with different roundworm species

	Eggs, through Ingestion	Larvae, through the milk	Larvae, across the placenta	Larvae, by ingestion of transport or intermediate host
<i>T. leonina</i>	X			X
<i>T. cati</i>	X	X		X
<i>T. canis</i>	X	X	X	X

Infections in Humans from roundworms

How do roundworms cause disease in humans?

T. cati and *T. canis* pose a significant health hazard to people. Thousands of people become infected with *Toxocara* in the United States every year. How do people become infected? Humans become infected when they ingest infective eggs from the soil or from their hands or another object. Large numbers of the eggs can accumulate in the soil where dogs and cats are allowed to defecate. The eggs are sticky, and can collect on the hands and under the fingernails of people. Children, and others who may not have good hygiene, are most prone to becoming infected.

Remember, *Toxocara* eggs need to be in the environment approximately two weeks, before becoming infective, so direct contact with an infected animal generally does not result in transmission. However, young animals may continually contaminate their entire litter area, and may even have infective eggs stuck to their coats. Adults and children who handle the mother or the young or who clean the area may be especially at risk.

If a human ingests *Toxocara* eggs, the subsequent larvae can migrate through the person's tissues. This condition is called 'visceral larva migrans.' The larvae most commonly migrate through the liver, lungs, and brain. They can cause severe *inflammation* and actual mechanical damage to the organs. Signs of this disease include an enlarged liver, intermittent fever, loss of weight and appetite, and a persistent cough. Asthma or pneumonia may develop.

A unique form of this disease is called '*ocular* larva migrans.' Larvae migrate through the eyes and can cause vision loss or even blindness. Ocular larva migrans usually occurs in children 7-8 years old, whereas, visceral larva migrans occurs in children ages 1-4 years. The reason for the difference among ages is unknown.

To prevent human infection, good hygiene is extremely important. Teach children, especially, to wash their hands after playing and before eating. Do not let children play in areas where cats or dogs may have defecated. Do not allow cats to use sandboxes or the garden as litter boxes. Worm your pets as recommended, keep the environment clean, and control rodent populations.

Hookworms

Hookworms are the most common parasites in cats and dogs, especially in kittens and puppies. They can cause severe disease including anemia and serious diarrhea. They attach themselves to the wall of the intestine with teeth like structures or cutting plates. They then feed on the animal's blood. Hookworms can infect your cat from the soil or water, by eating an infected transport host, from the larvae penetrating their skin, and kittens and puppies can become infected from nursing. Adults lay eggs in the intestines and they pass out in the feces. In 1-3 weeks the larvae hatch. Larvae are excellent swimmers and can even travel through raindrops in the early morning dew. Hookworms cannot survive in the environment in extreme dry heat or freezing cold conditions, and can live for several weeks in cool moist soil.

The larvae enter the host by burrowing through the skin or by being ingested. Larvae that enter through the skin migrate to the lungs and trachea (throat), and are coughed up and swallowed. They then pass into the digestive track and attach to the intestinal wall. Most larvae that are eaten go straight to the intestinal track and attach to the intestinal wall, however some migrate through the tissues and enter the lungs and trachea where they are coughed up and swallowed. Some will even stop migration halfway and encyst in the muscles. Larvae that encyst in the muscle can migrate to the uterus of a pregnant mother and infect the fetuses. They can also migrate to the mammary glands and infect nursing kittens.

Hookworms can cause severe disease by causing an animal to become anemic. You will usually notice that the gums of the animal are pale in color due to the lack of red blood cells. The animal will become weak, and black tarry stools can sometimes be seen. Growth in young animals is stunted, and their coat may appear dull and dry. Most animals will eventually become emaciated and die from infection. Hookworms can also infect people by burrowing through the skin (usually through bare feet).

If your pets are ever infected with hookworms you will need to clean the environment. Litter boxes can be cleaned in hot water with bleach. Animals that are infected should be kept separate from other pets until their infection has cleared. It is important to practice good hygiene to prevent hookworms from infecting humans. This is particularly important with children.

Common hookworm species found in Cats and Dogs.

Latin Name	Common Name	Hosts Infected
<i>A. tubaeforme</i>	Feline hookworm	Cat
<i>A. braziliense</i>	Canine and feline hookworm	Cat, dog, fox, human (skin)
<i>U. stenocephala</i>	Northern canine hookworm	Cat, dog, fox
<i>A. caninum</i>	Canine hookworm	Dog, fox, possibly humans (intestine)

The size of hookworms when compared to a penny



Whipworms

Whipworms are common in dogs and cats. There is only one known whipworm to affect cats; *Trichuris serrate*. *Trichuris serrate* is rare. Whipworms get their name from their whip like shape. Whipworms live in the large intestine and the cecum (a small dead-end section of the intestine lying at the junction of the small and large intestine). Whipworms burrow their mouths into the intestinal wall and feed on blood. The adults lay eggs that pass in the feces, and they must remain in the soil for about a month to mature and be capable of causing infection. Whipworm eggs can live in moist soil for years, and are resistant to freezing.

Infections in cats are very rare, and there are typically no symptoms of an infection. There may be signs of blood in the stool, or anemia, but typically these symptoms are linked to something else. A vet will typically find this worm after performing a fecal exam. Unlike other worms, whipworms cannot be treated with traditional wormers used for other worms. Special medications must be used to kill the worm.

A whipworm as seen through a microscope



This table shows common treatments for gastrointestinal parasites in cats, the minimum weight for dosage, and the minimum age for dosage. You can talk to your vet more about all of these medications.

Oral Treatments for Gastrointestinal Parasites in Cats			
Ingredient(s)	Example	Range of Efficacy*	Minimum Age/Weight
piperazine salts	Hartz Advanced Care Liquid Wormer/Sergeants Worm Away	R	6 weeks
milbemycin oxime	Interceptor**	R,H	6 weeks/1.5 lbs
selamectin	Revolution**	R,H,EM,F	8 weeks
imidacloprid/moxidectin	Advantage Multi for Cats**	R,H,EM,F	9 weeks/2 lbs
pyrantel pamoate/praziquantel	Drontal	R,H,TT,FT	4 weeks/1.5 lbs
emodepside/praziquantel	Profender	R,H,TT,FT	8 weeks/2.2 lbs
ivermectin	Heartgard Chewables**	H	6 weeks
praziquantel	Droncit Feline Cestocide, Tradewinds Tapeworm Tabs	TT,FT	6 weeks
epsiprantel	Cestex	TT,FT	7 weeks

*Effective against these parasites:

R = Roundworms

H = Hookworms

EM = Ear mites

F = Fleas

TT = Taenid tapeworms

FT = Flea tapeworms

**Also prevents heartworm

Other common parasites in cats

Coccidia – Coccidia are small protozoans (single celled organism) that multiply in the intestinal tracts of cats and dogs. Coccidia is mostly seen in kittens and puppies, or adults with compromised immune systems. Some adults may be a carrier of Coccidia and show no symptoms, but will shed the cysts in their feces. The symptoms are typically diarrhea, and blood and mucous may be present as well. Severely infected animals may also lose their appetite, become dehydrated and in some cases Coccidia may cause death (mostly in kittens). There is no immunity to Coccidia. Coccidia reproduce in the intestines and shed their infective cysts into the feces. Mother cats can pass this to their kittens easily because of the close contact they have with one another. When this happens it can have severe and deadly effects on the kittens' bodies. Coccidia is very contagious between cats and dogs alike. Highly stressed animals may also show severe symptoms of Coccidia similar to those with compromised immune systems. Coccidia is treated with different medications you can get from your vet (treating for 1-3 weeks usually) and it is diagnosed by your vet with a microscopic fecal exam. If you have an infected animal it is very important to clean the litter box and toys. Coccidia can withstand freezing temperatures and can withstand most household disinfectants. Flies and other insects can also carry Coccidia from one place to another when they land, so it is imperative that food and water bowls are cleaned regularly, especially during infections.

Giardia – Giardia is a protozoa that lives in the small intestine of cats and dogs. Giardia is common, but diseases are rare. Cats become infected after eating a cyst. The cyst will break open and the active form will divide and eventually encyst, and pass in the feces. Giardia can contaminate the environment and water. Giardia typically does not show symptoms, except in younger animals, where it may cause diarrhea. It can be acute, intermittent, or chronic. An infected animal may lose weight. Giardia prevents the proper absorption of nutrients, can damage the intestinal lining, and interfere with digestion. A vet may find a giardia infection during a fecal exam but they are small and are not always present. Giardia can infect humans so good hygiene should be followed to prevent infection.

Toxoplasma gondii – Commonly called Toxoplasmosis, *Toxoplasma gondii* can commonly infect cats. Toxoplasma lives in the intestine and the oocytes (immature egg like forms) pass in the feces. Oocytes must be in the environment for 1-5 days before they are infective. Oocytes can live in the environment for years and are resistant to most disinfectants. Symptoms of Toxoplasmosis are nonspecific: fever, loss of appetite, and depression. Cats that present with this illness could be tested for FeLV, FIV, and FIP (especially if they spend any time outdoors). Toxoplasmosis is typically detected by testing for antibodies in the blood. It is extremely important for pregnant women to avoid infected cats and feces, as Toxoplasmosis can cause birth defects and even death of the fetus.

Ear mites – There are several types of ear mites that can infect dogs and cats. Ear mites are extremely contagious. They can be passed from the mother to the offspring and can spread to other pets in the household if one member is infected. Typical symptoms are itching ears and/or shaking the head. These symptoms will be more severe relative to the severity of the infection. If the insides of your pets ears look like they have dried coffee grounds or a thick waxy coat they may be infected with ear mites. Bacterial and yeast infections are common with these same symptoms as well. Ear mites are VERY common, but left uncontrolled they can severely damage the ear canals and eardrum. They can cause permanent hearing damage/loss. Most flea and tick prevention medications kill ear mites. These include but are not limited to Frontline and Revolution.

Cat with an infection of ear mites



Fleas – Fleas are a very common problem for dogs and cats. Major symptoms of fleas include scratching, frequent licking or biting the skin, red irritated skin with small red bites, hotspots (though these are more present in dogs), and a brown/black substance on the skin that looks like small grains of dirt. It is important to treat for fleas and they can cause other intestinal parasites, can infect a house and other companion pets you may have, and cause anemia which can lead to death.

Ticks – Cats do not normally have problems with ticks unless they are indoor/outdoor cats. Ticks can be treated with monthly medications that also treat fleas. You can get a prescription from your vet. The easiest solution to ticks is to keep your cat as an indoor cat. This will also reduce many other risks to your cat.

More information on cat parasites can be found at these links:

<http://www.peteducation.com/category.cfm?c=1+2236>

<http://www.petsandparasites.org/cat-owners/overview>

Other health issues you might encounter with your new cat

Vomiting – Vomiting is a very common problem with cats and can be caused by many different things. Some are simple while others can be severe and serious. These can include but are not limited to eating something poisonous or inedible (like a string or piece of a toy), hairball, urinary tract infections, bacterial infections, viral infections, and diabetes. Symptoms will include abdominal heaving and watering of the mouth. Nausea associated with vomiting will typically cause a lack of appetite in your cat, and your cat may become dehydrated. If you notice that your cats behavior has changed and/or he/she is continuously vomiting contact your vet. (If you can, bring a sample of the vomit to the vet.)

Diarrhea – Many different things can cause diarrhea in your cat. Something as simple as a change in their normal diet can cause an upset stomach and diarrhea. If your cat suffers from chronic diarrhea, or has loose stools that don't seem to go away after a few days, you will need to contact your vet. Your vet may want to run a fecal examination to check to see what is wrong, so they may ask you to bring in a sample for them to test. If you see any stool that appears with red blood, solid or diarrhea, you should contact your vet immediately. There could be a serious underlying health condition that might need immediate attention.

Feline Lower Urinary Tract Diseases – FLUTD describes a variety of conditions that affect the bladder and urethra of cats. Typical symptoms are difficulty or pain during urination, and blood in the urine (will appear pink or red in color). Cats also tend to lick themselves excessively and may urinate outside the litter box (often on cool smooth surfaces like a tile floor or bathtub). FLUTD can occur at any age, but it is mostly seen in middle aged, overweight cats that get little exercise, and eat a dry food only diet. Emotional and environmental stress, and multi-cat households can increase the risk a cat will develop FLUTD. Cats that have urethral blockage (path between the bladder and outside of body) and cannot pass urine or can only pass small amounts need immediate attention or death can result in a matter of hours. This is more common in male cats, but happens in females as well. Typically a cat will be increasingly distressed when urethral blockage occurs. Your vet will typically run a test on your cats urine to determine if he/she has FLUTD, if typical symptoms are present. Common causes include, urinary stones, urinary tract infection, urethral obstruction, feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC), and other causes such as diabetes and hyperthyroidism (over active thyroid). More rare causes include tumors, congenital abnormalities, and injury to the urinary tract or spinal cord. If you believe your cat has a urinary issue, contact your vet immediately.

Major Signs and Symptoms of FLUTD

- Straining to urinate
- Urinating small amounts
- Frequent and/or prolonged attempts to urinate
- Crying out when urinating (because it is painful)
- Excessive licking of the genital area
- Urinating outside the box
- Blood in the urine

Eye Problems – Several different things can cause eye problems in cats. Most symptoms will present with runny watery eyes, tear stained fur, cloudiness of the eye, red and inflamed eye, yellow discharge in the eye, the cat pawing at the eye, and being able to see the third eyelid. Eye problems can be caused from several different things including bacteria, viruses, a scratched eye (corneal abrasion), cataracts, glaucoma, retinal disease, allergies, or most commonly conjunctivitis. Call your vet if you notice any changes in your cat's eyes. The cause may need immediate treatment to prevent permanent damage or blindness. Eye infections can also be a sign of an upper respiratory infection in your cat, which will more than likely need to be treated with antibiotics (URI).

This cat is presenting with conjunctivitis



Children and Cats

Cats can be a wonderful addition to households with children. I have seen cats become the most loved and cherished friend of many children. If you have children and are trying to decide whether or not to add a cat to your family, or if you already have a cat and are bringing a new child into the family, then this article may be of help. There are several important considerations concerning choosing the right cat at the right time. The article will also explore why cats are sometimes better pets than dogs for small children as well as health concerns for children and cats living in the same household.

Choosing the right cat for the right child at the right time.

Responsible parenting and responsible pet ownership are very similar in that they require 100% commitment from the parent and pet owner. A new kitten is going to initially require time every day for grooming, play, socialization, and training. Children will probably provide plenty of play and socialization but the grooming, litter box cleaning, and training are going to be the responsibility of the parent. Make sure that the entire family is committed to bringing a new pet into the home.

Homes with children are often louder and more stressful than homes without them. Choosing a cat or kitten that is more 'laid back' is often a good place to start. When I think of the perfect family cat; a large, neutered, male, orange, domestic shorthair comes to mind. It all comes down to the temperament of the cat, and selecting the right cat.

Cats love gentle attention and respond to affection. Small boys are often more interested in chasing the cat than petting him. If you have active or aggressive children, a cat may be too much of a temptation to them to roughhouse.

Cats are more mobile than dogs and are able to jump up on a perch and get out of the way of small children. Cats also pose less of a threat of biting or injuring a child, and therefore may make a more suitable choice than a dog for small children. However, remember that some cats will never adapt well to being in a family with children and some children will never appreciate or be able to properly care for a cat. Deciding to bring a cat into a family with children is a very important decision and should not be taken lightly.

Bringing a new cat into a family with children

Once you have made the decision to bring a cat into your home and have picked out the perfect companion for your children, you should spend some time getting your home ready. Go through and cat-proof your home. Take special care to eliminate hazards, especially to a small kitten. Designate an easily accessible yet small childproof area for the cats litter box and food. Have a family meeting and make up a list of rules and duties concerning the new cat and hang it on the refrigerator. Because of the responsibility and potential health risk involved with litter boxes, I always recommend that the parent take on the job of cleaning the litter box.

New kittens and cats are going to need several weeks of quiet time when they are first brought into a new home. Limit play to several short sessions a day and make sure the kitten is not bothered when sleeping. A cat door leading into a quiet room with food, water, litter box, and a sleeping area is a great idea for homes with small children.

Decide where the cat is, or more likely is not, allowed to sleep. While there are many advocates of allowing cats to sleep in the bed with their owners, I caution owners of small children against this practice. While the health risks are small, external parasites including fleas and ticks, as well as the ringworm fungus, can be transmitted from cats to people. If children have allergies, then cats should be discouraged from sleeping with them or in their bedrooms.

Bringing a new baby into a home that already has a cat

I often receive phone calls from anxious parents concerned over the risk of bringing a new baby home to a house that has a resident cat. I often reassure them that if a few simple adjustments are made both the cat and the baby will do wonderfully. The most common concern is whether there is a risk of a cat sleeping with and smothering a baby. While I assure them that I have never heard of this happening, I caution them that it is well known that there is a strong correlation between sleeping position and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Pediatricians have strict recommendations for the type of bed and blankets used, as well as never placing stuffed animals or other toys in the bed with babies or small children. Because of the risk of suffocation, it is never acceptable to allow a cat in the bed of a child less than three years of age. We recommend that cats are not allowed into the children's bedrooms until they are older, and there is a door that can be closed to keep them out at night.

Some cats have difficulty adjusting to a new baby initially. The new parents are often busy, tired, and focused on the new baby. The cat that was once the center of all the attention has now taken a back seat to the new baby. By anticipating this and the potential problems that could arise, a pet owner should try to lessen the shock by slowly introducing new baby furniture, blankets, etc., over a period of time. After the arrival of the baby, make sure you set aside time every day to groom and play with the cat. The adjustment period may take a month or longer, but almost all cats adjust after a short while. Adding a new cat to the family at this time as a companion for your cat is not always a good idea. A new kitten will just add to the stress of the existing cat as well as taking more of the owner's time away from the cat to care for the kitten.

Health Concerns

Most of the health concerns involving children and cats concern toddlers and small children and revolve around the children coming into contact with cat feces. Roundworms, the protozoan *Toxoplasma*, and certain bacteria can all be transmitted to children that ingest cat feces. For this reason we recommend that children are not allowed to play around, or clean the litter boxes. Outside sandboxes and dirt piles are also places where children can come in contact with cat feces. Invest in a sandbox that can be covered. In our house, we have eliminated the sand and use pea gravel instead. It is much cleaner and cats are not attracted to it like sand.

Keeping your cat properly vaccinated against Rabies is a must, as well as frequent de-worming, and parasite control. Apply the monthly topical flea tick treatments to cats at night after the children have gone to bed and discourage handling of the cats for 24 hours. The flea growth regulator (Lufenuron), has been shown to be very safe for both cats and the children that handle them. The ringworm fungus is a fungus carried by some cats that can infect children. While the fungus is irritating, it is not a serious health concern for healthy children and can be easily treated with a prescription anti-fungal cream. If you suspect that either your cat or child may have ringworm, you should seek out veterinary and human medical advice and care.

Cat bites or scratches are another common medical concern. Because of the risk of infection, particularly from the bacteria *Bartonella henselae* that can cause the serious infection known as 'cat scratch fever,' cat scratches and bites should always be treated seriously. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all scratches and bites, and seek immediate medical attention if there is any sign of infection, pain, or fever. Indoor only cats are extremely unlikely to carry *B. henselae*.

Preventing scratches or bites is crucial. Teach your children to handle and treat cats correctly. Use intervention to prevent bites and scratches. Young children and cats should never be left unsupervised, and be particularly cautious with stray or unfamiliar cats.

** This article was pulled from the pet education link on the next page.

Simple solutions for common problems

The following is a list of some common cat-child problems that arise and a list of possible solutions.

The child wants to play in the litter box.

Solutions: Put up a child gate.

Put the litter box out of reach on a table or shelf.

Put the litter box in a room with a door that the child cannot open, and install a cat door for the cat.

The toddler eats the cat food.

Solutions: (The same as for playing in the litter box.)

The cat gets in the child's bed.

Solutions: Put a door on the child's bedroom.

Discourage the cat from going into the child's room.

Provide the cat with a perch or bed of its own.

The cat uses the child's sandbox for a litter box.

Solutions: Use a sandbox cover.

Replace the sand with pea gravel.

Remove the sandbox completely.

The children chase and worry the cat.

Solutions: Supply the cat with a high perch that the children cannot reach.

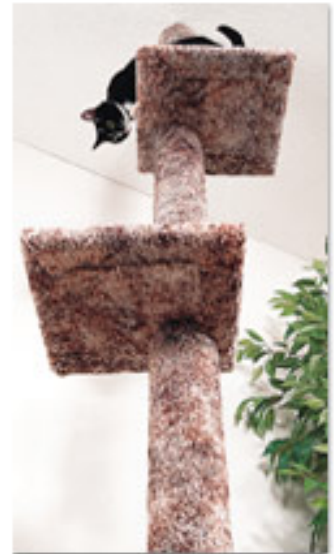
Provide the cat with an escape room and cat door.

The cat is aggressive toward the children.

Solutions: Encourage the children to not handle the cat.

Have the children feed the cat and give the cat treats.

Contact a veterinary behavior specialist for the cat.



Children can develop wonderful relationships with their cat. To help ensure that, follow some good common sense precautions and choose the right cat at the right time for your child. Both the child and the cat require a huge investment of your time and energy. You will find that if you can devote the time to both, your rewards will be far greater than anything money could ever buy.

**More information on many topics can be found online at <http://www.peteducation.com/index.cfm?c=1>

The chart below is presented, with the kind permission of its author Lili Chin. Notice the different body language in each column, and remember that if your cat is tolerating, rather than enjoying your child at that moment, it's time to help your cat escape before things escalate. Be safe, rather than sorry.

CAT LANGUAGE



©2015 Lili Chin - doggiedrawings.net - Creative Commons Licence BY-NC-ND

Help Us Help More Cats!

[Amazon Smile](#)

Do you use Amazon to shop? Did you know you can shop and support OPH at the same time? Adding OPH to your shopping trips is easy.

For Amazon, simply go to - <http://smile.amazon.com>. Select "Operation Paws for Homes" as your choice of Charity. Then shop! It's literally that easy and you can get shopping done and know you helped to save dogs and cats at the same time.

[GoodSearch](#)

OPH has joined over 100k other non-profit organizations and schools on GoodSearch. Goodsearch is a search engine, powered by Yahoo that donates a penny per search to a designated cause. Designate <http://www.Goodsearch.com> as your primary search engine and start contributing to the rescue, rehabilitation, and placement of dogs or cats in need, one search at a time!

Select "Operation Paws for Homes" as your cause: [GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com)

[iGive](#)

With your iGive account, our rescue will receive a donation every time you shop at over 1,000 online stores. These including Crate and Barrel, Buy Buy Baby, Petco, Toys R Us, and over 1,300 more stores!! It's free and easy and you can help us to save more cats and dogs!

Select "Operation Paws for Homes": [iGive](#)

[Wooftrax](#)

Support us simply by walking your dog! Use the app each time you grab for the leash. It's healthy for you, your dog, and OPH. The average donation is 25 cents per mile. Find Operation Paws for Homes listed under **Alexandria VA, Baltimore MD, Hanover PA and Washington DC.**

Visit - <http://www.wooftrax.com/> and select "Operation Paws for Homes"