



Adopt a Pet™

Six steps to help keep your new kitty safe

Before those curious paws start exploring,
make sure your home is ready for their arrival.

Bringing home a new cat? Take these six steps to prevent escapes, avoid hidden hazards, and keep them safe for years to come.

1. Get them ID'd, stat

Even if your new cat will live exclusively indoors, ID'ing them from day one is a must. If they ever escape, proper identification increases the chances they'll make it safely back home. Have your cat wear a breakaway collar with an ID tag at all times. Include your phone number so anyone who finds them can quickly reach you.

A microchip provides permanent identification if your cat gets lost and their collar comes off. If they're already chipped, register the chip in your name right away, and update your contact information anytime your phone number or address changes.

2. Start with a safe room

A whole new home is a lot to take in at once. For the first one to two weeks, keep your new cat in a small, quiet room of their own with food, water, a litter box, hiding spots, and other essentials. This gives them time to decompress and adjust to the sights, sounds, and smells of their new home before exploring the rest of the living space.

Secure doors and windows

Cats can be skilled escape artists. Be extra careful when opening exterior doors, and check that windows are securely closed. Don't rely on window screens to contain your cat, as they can tear, pop out, or be pushed loose.

Keep the great outdoors off-limits

The great outdoors comes with some not-so-great risks for cats. For your cat's safety, keep them indoors, where they're protected from traffic, predators, extreme weather, and sources of disease and toxins. If your newly adopted cat previously lived indoors and outdoors, be especially vigilant about escape attempts.

Want to give your cat some fresh air?

A secure catio is a safer way for them to enjoy the outdoors.

While not recommended, if you do plan to let your cat roam outside, wait at least 30 days. It can take that long (or longer) for their internal sense of "home" to reset after a move.





3. Practice slow and steady intros

New people and other pets should be a slow reveal, not a surprise party. Give your new cat time to settle in before making introductions. When they're ready to meet new people, ask visitors to let your cat approach on their own terms rather than forcing interaction.

Take things very slowly with other pets. Start with scent-swapping, then progress to them looking at each other through a door or gate, and eventually move on to supervised face-to-face introductions.

4. Get to know your vet early

Don't wait until something's wrong to find a vet for your new cat. Schedule a checkup within the first one to two weeks for a baseline physical exam and review of their health history.

5. Cat-proof the house and yard

Cats explore with their noses, paws, and mouths, so check every space they can access — indoors and out — for potential toxins.

And don't forget the non-toxic troublemakers. Cat-proof your home by securing electrical cords, string, ribbon, hair ties, rubber bands, floss, small objects, and anything else your curious cat might decide is worth chewing or swallowing.

6. Watch that first meal

It's normal for a new cat to have a reduced appetite while adjusting to an unfamiliar home, but keep a close eye on whether or not they're eating. Kittens should eat within 24 hours and adult cats within 48 hours. If your new cat hasn't eaten within those time frames, check with your vet.

Keep these common hazards out of reach:

- **Toxic plants:**
Lilies, azaleas, oleander, tulips, sago palms, and certain other plants are toxic to cats. Lilies are especially dangerous to cats — even small exposures to the leaves, petals, pollen, or vase water can cause potentially fatal kidney failure.
- **Toxic foods:**
Chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, alcohol, caffeine, and other foods are harmful to cats.
- **Human and pet medications:**
Pain relievers, prescription drugs, and supplements that are intended for humans or other pets can hurt cats.
- **Household and yard chemicals:**
Cleaners, bleach, pesticides, rodenticides, fertilizers, antifreeze, and other chemicals are hazards to cats.



A little preparation can have a big impact. With these safeguards in place, you can help your new cat settle in with confidence and remain safe long after they've made themselves at home.

Grab your free adopter kit

Tell us about your pet's adoption, and we'll send along special offers and resources to help you settle in together.



For more pet adoption advice on what your cat's first days, weeks, and months at home may look like, visit adoptapet.com