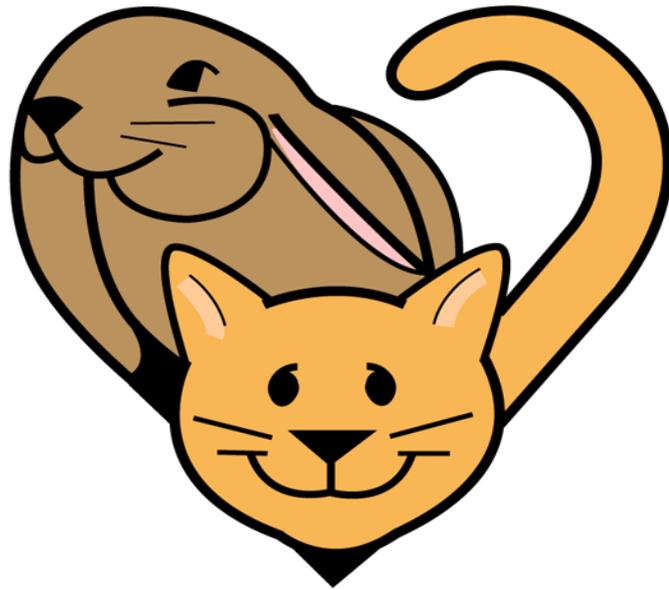


# Cat Care



## Furry Friends Refuge

1211 Grand Ave

West Des Moines, IA 50265

515-222-0009

[www.furryfriendsrefuge.org](http://www.furryfriendsrefuge.org)

Email: [adoptions@furryfriendsrefuge.org](mailto:adoptions@furryfriendsrefuge.org)

## What do I need?

- Quality cat food
- Food/water dish
- Large litter box
- Cat litter
- Toys appropriate for the cat's age
- Scratching post or kitty condo with sisal posts
- Bed or cube or safe area for cat to sleep in

## Food

Feed a measured supply of high quality dry or canned cat food, or ideally both, based on the size and weight of your cat. Canned food can spoil if left out too long, so be sure to remove the uneaten food before adding more. Take your cat to the veterinarian if they refuse food for a 24 hour period. Do NOT feed a cat cow's milk. **WE FEED OUR CATS AT THE SHELTER PURINA CAT CHOW. WE DO MIX IN OTHER SELECT BRANDS THAT GET DONATED, BUT THEY HAVE A MAORITY/BASE DIET OF PURINA CAT CHOW.**

## Water

Your cat should have access to clean water at all times.

## Toys

Provide lots of toys for your cat, both toys they can enjoy alone, and those that are interactive with you. Kitty fishing poles are great toys used for you to interact with them. Balls, stuffed animals, play mice, scratching posts, and cat condos/trees are great toys for them to play with alone.

## Litter/Litter box

Purchase a standard open litter box large enough for the size of your cat. A covered litter box is not recommended because some cats will not use them consistently. An automatic litter box is also not recommended as the only litter box for a cat because the noise and movement scares some cats.

Place the litter box in the room where your cat will be staying. To begin with, this should be a bedroom or other small room that will be their safe place, away from other pets, and where you can spend time with them. If your new cat will be sleeping with you, the bedroom would be a good choice. Never expect a cat to travel to another room to use their litter box right away--it will take them a little while to adjust to the new environment.

You can move the litter box when your cat is comfortable navigating the entire house. This can be a different time frame for different cats. At that time, you can move the litter box a small amount at a time until you get it to the room that you want, or you can purchase another litter box to put in the new spot and then slowly move this one to be beside it. **If your cat ever stops using the litterbox, take them to your Veterinarian to be checked for a UTI.**

## Where will your new cat sleep? Where will your new cat be when you are not home?

These are questions you will need to strongly consider, preferably before your cat comes home with you. The cat should **NEVER** be brought into a home and given the entire house to roam right away. They should be kept in a separate small area like a bedroom where they sleep and where they can have their litter box and food close to them. You can take them out into the other areas of the house for short periods of time after the first day and extend the periods of time based on their reaction.

## Introductions with Other Cats/Dogs

**Slow, slow, slow.** Give the cat time to adapt to the new home before introducing to the existing cat/dog. Give them at least a week before your first introduction to other animals. It is a stressful time for them and they will react better when they feel more confident. During this time, the new cat and the existing animals are getting used to the other's smell without having interaction.

**It is important to keep your cat separate from other cats for at least a week.** There is always a chance that the cat may break with a cold from the stress of their spay/neuter surgery and/or from being in adoption and you do not want to subject your cat to a contagious upper respiratory virus. Symptoms of such illnesses can take from 7-14 days to surface. Remember, these animals will have their lives together-there is no need to rush the introduction.

**Cat to Existing Cat** – Start by allowing the existing cat to check out the “safe area” where your new cat has been kept (without the new cat present). You may offer the cat some food in the area or play with them to distract them as someone is holding the new cat or the new cat can be in a carrier if very frightened. Try to avoid forcing the meeting, just let it happen and typically it goes better. Always supervise the interaction! Keep them separated when you are not at home until you are absolutely sure that interaction will be safe.

**New Cat to Existing Dog** -- The dog should be on a leash and on the other side of a gate or screen door from the cat at first meeting. If this introduction is successful, the dog may then be on a leash with the new cat in a crate for protection. Look for signs of stress and discontinue if that occurs. At no time should the dog be allowed to show aggression toward the cat. If that occurs, remove the dog from the area and try again another time. Once all is well with nose to nose meeting through the crate and on leash, you can introduce off leash and without the carrier. Always supervise the interaction! Keep the dog and cat separated when you are not at home until you are absolutely sure that your cat is safe around the dog.

## Important “Do’s”

**Take your new cat to the vet** within 3-10 days for a check-up. If you do not work with an existing vet, we have agreements with the following vets for a free first vet exam:

- Banfield – Petsmart locations Always
- Broderick Animal Clinic – 10 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Waukee, (515) 987-1447
- Family Pet Veterinary Center West – 1215 Prospect Avenue, West Des Moines, (515) 224-9747
- Family Pet Veterinary Center Norwalk – 1326 Sunset Drive, Norwalk, (515) 981-0317
- Highland Park Animal Hospital - 4270 NW 6th Drive, Des Moines, IA (515) 243-4665
- Jordan Creek Animal Hospital – 3401 EP True Parkway, West Des Moines, (515) 224-9500

- Oaks Veterinary Clinic – 2030 27th St, Des Moines, (515) 279-3654
- Pet Medical Center of Urbandale – 4450 128<sup>th</sup> St, Urbandale, (515) 331-9035
- Starch Pet Hospital – 2222 University Ave, Des Moines, (515) 283-1576
- The Animal Hospital of Adel – 1126 Greene Street, Adel, (515) 993-3410
- Tri County Veterinary Clinic – 650 Highway T14, Pella, (641) 628-4040
- University West Pet Clinic – 8145 University Blvd, Clive, (515) 223-8185
- Urban Pet Hospital – 3601 104th Street, Urbandale, (515)727-0607
- Value Vet – 4654 Northwest 86th Street, Urbandale, (515) 278-1011
- Westfield Vet Hospital- 8789 NW 54th Ave, Johnston, IA 50131 (515) 986-5738

**Watch your cat for signs of illness.** Watch for sneezing, runny nose or watery eyes which are signs of an upper respiratory virus that commonly surfaces in cats in stressful situations. A cat with a lack of appetite, lethargy, or diarrhea should be taken to the veterinarian for an exam. It is easy for a cat to get dehydrated if they are not eating or drinking properly or if they have diarrhea.

**Remove any houseplants** within reach of the cat. Many are poisonous, including philodendrons and lilies. Either hang your plants or remove them from where the cat will be. There are many websites with full lists of plant names. If you are unsure of what type your plant is, you can take a leaf in to a local garden center for identification.

**Spend a lot of time with your cat**, especially if he or she does not have an animal companion. They need a lot of reassurance in this time of big changes, and lots of play to stay a happy cat!

**Brush the cat** at least a couple times a week even though they may not be shedding. It will start a routine and will get the cat used to brushing.

**Check their nails to see if they need trimmed**—they grow very fast. Trim off just the hooked tips of the nails to avoid injury to the cat or you may take them to the vet or to Furry Friends Refuge for nail trimming.

## Important “Don’ts”

**NEVER let your cat go outside** without a halter collar, leash, and supervision.

**Do NOT play rough with your cat** or promote biting in play. You do not want to teach your cat to bite your hands. If your cat does bite during play, make a loud “ouch” noise or hissing noise loud enough to startle the cat and then replace your hand with an appropriate toy. If your cat keeps up with the rough play, it is time for him or her to go to their safe area for a time out.