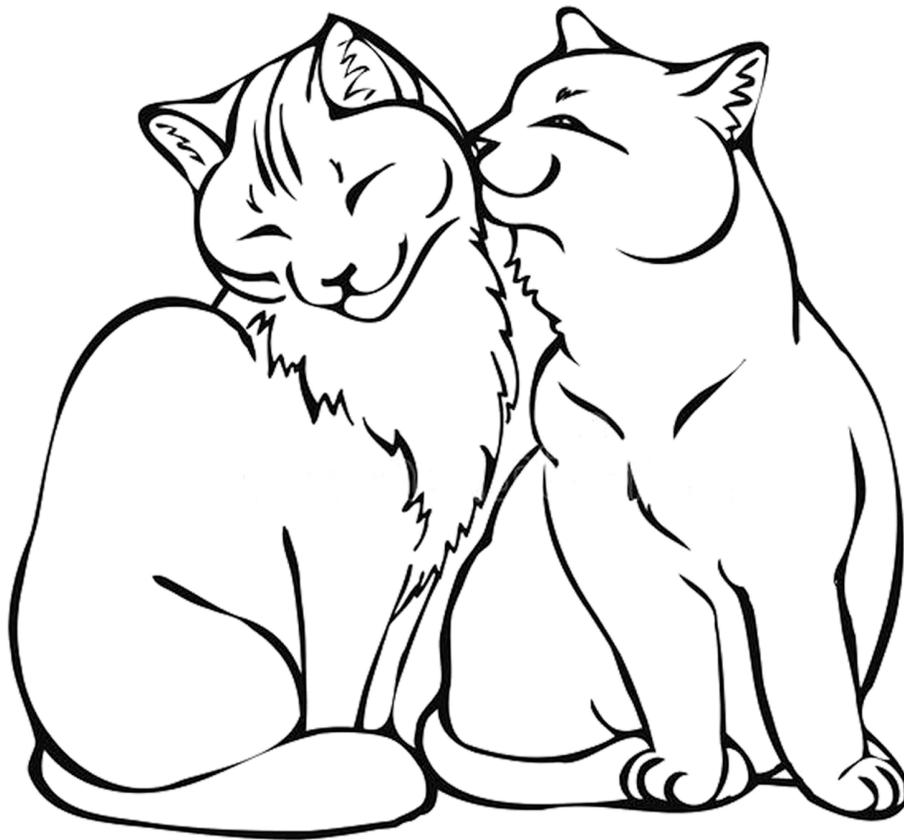


Red Door

Animal Shelter's

Basic Cat Care Booklet



"Time spent with cats is never wasted"

- Sigmund Freud

Red Door is no-kill animal shelter located at
2410 W. Lunt Chicago, IL 60645
773-764-2242 reddoorshelter.org @reddoorshelter

How much will a pet cat cost?

Cats can be pretty low-maintenance pets, but there are a number of essential costs to ensure that they live a full, healthy life. **Cats adopted from Red Door are already spayed/neutered, microchipped, dewormed, and current on all vaccinations.** These procedures alone can cost over \$500, so the \$100 adoption fee is a real bargain! Because cats can live 15+ years, they are a big, long-term commitment and must be treated as such. Below is a list of most costs associated with adopting a cat; please be aware that these are rough estimates, and exact costs will vary.

One-time costs: \$190 and up

Red Door adoption fee: \$125

Food/water bowls: \$5-15+

Litter box: \$10-30+

Litter scooper: \$5-10+

Carrier: \$20-60+

Grooming supplies: \$10-20+

Toys/treats: \$5-20+

Scratching post/mat: \$10-50+

Monthly costs: \$60 and up

Food: \$20-60 (depending on brand/dietary needs/etc)

Litter: \$20-40

Flea/tick prevention: \$20-80

Vet costs: \$60 and up

Annual exam and vaccines: \$60-150+

Emergency care: \$300-1000+

Medicines: (prices will vary with short- or long-term illness)

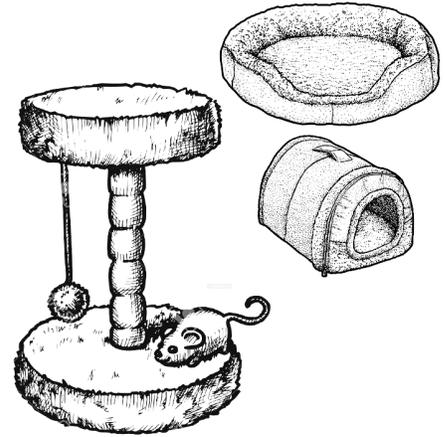
Pet insurance: \$15+ per month



Cat Essentials

It's important to be prepared before bringing your feline companion home.

- Food and water bowls
- Canned and/or dry food (see below)
- Cat litter
- Litterbox & litter scoop
- Pet carrier- choose one with opening on top and front
- Nail clippers, brush and comb
- Scratching post, toys, catnip, bed

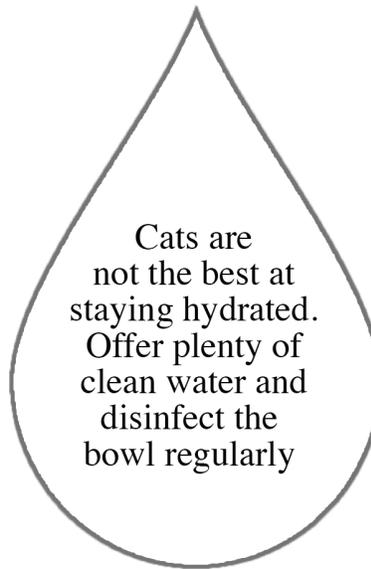


Feeding Your Cat

Indoor cats should be **fed at least twice per day** and receive 1/3 -1/2 cup of food per day.(167–250 calories). There are numerous brands of wet/dry cat food. Most canned food is approximately 5 ounces, which is the perfect amount for a single indoor adult cat. Kittens, large breeds, or cats with health issues may require more or less food. Please consult your vet to find out what is appropriate for your cat.

Wet Food

- ✓ Contains water. Cats don't always drink as much as they should, so the extra moisture in wet food is a great supplement for hydration, especially for senior cats.
- ✓ Strong odor. While we may find it repulsive, it appeals to cats and entices them to eat. It is especially beneficial for older cats that have lost some of their olfactory senses, and for picky or ill cats that don't have an appetite for very much.



Dry Food

- ✓ Promotes dental health. Kibble can help reduce tartar build up, and some is designed to actually clean the teeth.
- ✓ Economical and convenient. Airtight storage allows for a long shelf life, and the ease of filling a bowl with kibble to last for days means less work for the human.



Dietary Needs: Many brands manufacture different formulas based on age (kitten, adult, senior) or specific health issues (urinary health, weight management, sensitive stomach) If your cat does not have any health concerns, then most foods will be appropriate.

Price: More expensive foods are made with real meat and all-natural or organics ingredients. Bargain foods will be made with processed meat byproducts, artificial coloring and preservatives.

Cat's Preference: Cats can be finicky eaters, so experiment to see what your kitty likes best. Cat food is made with 3 different proteins: poultry, beef, or seafood. Canned food comes in different textures: pate, shredded, ground, chunky. with or without gravy.

Common Cat Health Issues

Cats are very adept at hiding signs of pain and illness. Be vigilant and know how to spot warning signs. If you see any of these symptoms, consult your veterinarian!

Allergies – Cats may develop allergies most commonly to household cleaners or ingredients in their food. If they have frequent vomiting, diarrhea, flaky or dry skin, or missing fur, talk to your vet about possible allergy treatments.

Arthritis – This is more common in senior cats. As they age, the strain on their hips and joints can begin to take its toll. Some arthritis is easily managed with over-the-counter glucosamine supplements, but it is best to ask your vet for the best treatment. If you see your cat limping or having difficulty walking, moving up and down stairs, or he is suddenly just not as active as he used to be, it could be a sign of arthritis.

Bladder infections/stones – Check your litter box regularly. If kitty is not producing much urine, is peeing outside the litter box frequently, or seems to be straining/having trouble urinating while in the box, it could be a sign of a serious bladder infection! Call your vet if these symptoms persist.

Diabetes – Symptoms of diabetes include drastic changes in your cat's appetite, weight, activity level, and excessive thirst and urination. If you see any of these signs in your cat, consult your vet and he will perform a blood test to see if diabetes may be the cause. Many cats can live perfectly comfortable and long lives with daily insulin treatments!

Ear infections/mites – It is important to clean your cat's ears regularly. Some cats are more prone to wax buildup than others, but sometimes what we think is just wax is actually more serious. Ear mites can cause an enormous amount of gritty-looking buildup in the ear canal, and can be extremely uncomfortable and even painful for your cat. If your cat has dark ear discharge or you notice him scratching his ears incessantly, it could be that he has an infection or an infestation of ear mites. These are common ailments that can be treated by your vet.

Gingivitis - Some cats are prone to gum and/or dental disease. Regular brushing of your cat's teeth and gums can help prevent the onset of dental disease, as can dental chews. Many vets can perform dental cleanings for your cat while it is under anesthesia.



Common Cat Health Issues (continued)

Hairballs – As self-groomers, cats are very prone to getting hairballs due to frequent ingestion of fur. It is not uncommon to find hairballs coughed up, but if you notice your cat grooming excessively or vomiting non-hairball contents (food or bile), there could be a more serious issue going on that should be checked out by your vet.

Increased appetite – If your cat displays a drastic increase in his desire to eat, it could be a sign of diabetes or an overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism). Both of these conditions are manageable with your veterinarian's guidance.

Lack of appetite – Cats have a reputation for being finicky eaters! It is not uncommon if your cat refuses to eat anything but a very specific flavor of a very specific food. However, if your typically ravenous cat seems to suddenly take a disinterest in eating altogether, it could be a sign of something serious with your cat's digestive system, kidneys, or liver. If your cat has lost interest in food and is noticeably losing weight, take him to the vet immediately – the sooner these illnesses are caught, the better the prognosis!

Upper respiratory infections – Cats can get colds, just like humans. If you notice your cat sniffing, sneezing with discharge, wheezing, or coughing, it could be a sign of a respiratory illness, for which your vet can prescribe medication. Cats with asthma can also display these symptoms, so it's best to check with your vet to determine the cause.



Cat Toxins

There are a number of foods, plants, and household items that can be toxic to cats if ingested! Be very careful to keep these out of kitty's reach, and call your vet immediately if you see or suspect your cat has consumed any of the following:

<u>Foods</u>	<u>Plants</u>	<u>Household Items</u>
Alcohol Chocolate Coffee and tea Dairy products Grapes, raisins Onions, garlic	Holly Lilies Tulips	Toilet/drain cleaner Carpet cleaner Laundry detergent

If your vet cannot immediately be reached, you can call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (a consultation fee may apply).

Vaccines & Disease Prevention

What are the recommended cat vaccines, and why are they important?

The two most important vaccines for cats are the **Rabies** and **FVRCP** (Feline Rhinotracheitis Virus, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia; commonly called *feline distemper*) vaccines. All Red Door cats are given these vaccines prior to adoption, in addition to being tested for **FeLV** (Feline Leukemia Virus) and **FIV** (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus). You will receive your Red Door cat's complete medical history, which will contain information about when your cat is due for its next annual wellness exam and shots.

You may consult your veterinarian for further vaccination recommendations.

Rabies is an inflammatory virus that affects the brain and central nervous system, causing aggression, loss of appetite, weight loss, disorientation, paralysis, seizures, and even death. It is usually transmitted through a bite from an infected animal, and the vaccine is required by law in most states. **The rabies vaccine should be given yearly; there is also a 3-year vaccine available.**

Feline Rhinotracheitis Virus is an upper respiratory disease caused by the feline herpesvirus. It is spread through airborne secretions of infected cats, and is known to cause chronic, life-long respiratory diseases.

Calicivirus is another upper respiratory virus that can cause painful mouth sores and is spread by direct contact with an infected animal.

Panleukopenia is a severe and sometimes fatal disease which can affect the immune system, nervous system, and gastrointestinal tract. This ailment is spread through direct contact with an affected cat.

The FVRCP(distemper) vaccine is a series of shots given to kittens as early as 6 weeks of age, repeating every 3-4 weeks until 4 months of age. A booster is recommended one year after the cat reaches 4 months of age, after which it should NOT be given more frequently than every 3 years.



Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) is contracted through an infected cat's saliva, blood, or passed from an infected mother to her kittens. For cats who cannot build immunity to FeLV, the disease can spread to the bone marrow, at which point there is no cure, and prognosis is poor.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that can cause AIDS in cats, similar to HIV in humans. It is not transmittable from cats to humans, and is most commonly spread through cats by deep bite wounds.

Litter FAQs

The kitty litter aisle is surprisingly overwhelming, as there are a lot of different litter offerings on the market these days! As with choosing a food, picking a litter depends on a few different factors: clumping ability, material, odor control, and tracking.

Why does my cat need a litter box?

This may seem like a silly question, but it's not! Cats are easily attracted to using litter boxes because of their innate desire to dig and bury their waste. Even big cats, like lions and tigers, do this! A litter box is the most convenient system of allowing your indoor cat to cover up his waste in a contained and easy-to-clean space, and because it comes so naturally to them, it is usually not a behavior that needs to be trained.

How much litter should I use?

There are instructions on every package of cat litter, but the general rule is to fill each box with a few inches of litter so that your kitty has enough litter on which eliminate and with which to cover up the waste. Furthermore, most cat specialists recommend at least one litter box per cat in a multi-cat household; this helps prevent accidents outside of the box as well as potential territorial issues.

What is cat litter made of?

The most widely used type of litter is made of clay, but there are also litters made of other materials, such as wheat, corn, paper, and wood. Cat owners sometimes switch from clay litter because of its high dust content, which can aggravate their allergies. Each of these other materials also has different odor control properties and may not be tracked around on your cat's paws as easily as clay, which is important for some people. Some of these materials are even flushable – but make sure you know this before attempting, or you may have to call a plumber!

What is the difference between clumping and non-clumping?

Clumping litter is probably the most popular and commonly used litter because of its convenience. This litter is designed to adhere to liquids and solids, so you can scoop out the waste without emptying the entire box. After scooping, simply add another small layer of litter on top to replace the litter you scooped. **Non-clumping litter** is also good because it absorbs urine and odors, so there is less waste you have to scoop from the box daily. It is also less expensive than clumping litter; however, because it absorbs urine, its odor control does not last as long as that of clumping litter. Due to this, a non-clumping box needs to be completely emptied and refilled at least once a week to prevent urine from seeping past the litter and pooling at the bottom of the box. A box of clumping litter can typically last for about a month before needing to be emptied and refilled.

Cat Behaviors

Cats can sometimes exhibit behaviors we find less than desirable. It's important to understand that these are usually natural instincts that cannot be completely stopped, but there are ways to train kitty to rein it in. Here are a few common behaviors and suggestions for handling them.

Scratching is a natural behavior that all cats display – it exercises the upper body muscles and is a way for them to mark their territory. You can set boundaries to show your cat what is and isn't appropriate scratching material. It is recommended you offer your cat multiple scratching posts so he has many options to choose from that aren't your furniture! Cover the posts with catnip and shower him with praise (or treats!) when you catch him scratching them – this will help him learn to associate scratching that particular spot with a positive experience. If you notice your cat scratching your couch, you can try to redirect him by picking him up and moving him to a scratching post, then praising him when he starts to scratch there. By teaching him that scratching the post is a positive, desirable act that can be rewarded, he will be more likely to continually focus his scratching on that post. Alternative tools to help deter scratching include kitty nail caps that adhere to the nails and double-sided sticky tape placed on surfaces that are off-limits to kitty. More information about these products can be found online or at your local pet supply store.

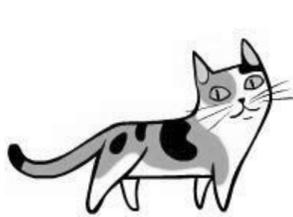
Climbing is also a natural skill cats possess, so don't be surprised if you find kitty on your bedroom dresser or on top of the refrigerator! Cats are limber and adventurous, and they will likely want to explore their new surroundings to their horizontal and vertical depths. If you catch your cat with her paws where they don't belong, bring her back to the floor and reward her if she comes down on her own. Repetition and consistency are the keys to your kitty comprehending the rules of the house, so it may take many instances before she starts to get the right idea.

Knocking things over is a common playful behavior that may be unwanted in your home. Cat experts believe this comes from their natural instinct as predators, toying with their prey. You can teach your cat that there are items you don't want him playing with by redirecting him to focus his attention on the plastic mouse toy rather than your porcelain figurine. Cats sometimes can exhibit this behavior as an act of boredom or attention-seeking, so it is suggested that you provide him with an assortment of toys to stay entertained so as to prevent destructive behaviors.

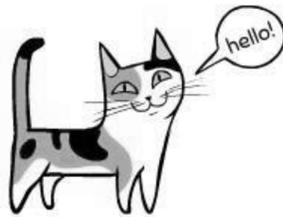
“The commitment to become a cat guardian means working with unwanted behavior to achieve a better relationship and deeper bond with your cat, to make the effort to replace negative habits with positive associations, and ultimately increase your cat's confidence so she can be a happy and loving companion for life.” –*Jackson Galaxy, Cat Behaviorist*

Cat Body Language

You can discern a lot about a cat's emotions by the way it presents itself! Learning how to understand your cat's posture, noises, and movements is critical in maintaining a positive relationship with him.



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



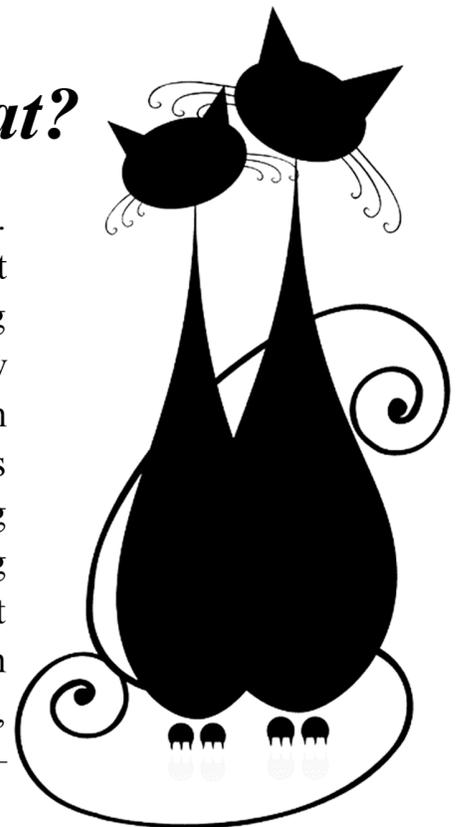
DISGUSTED

Bringing Your Cat Home

It's important to be **very patient** when introducing your cat to a new home. There are a whole slew of unfamiliar sights, smells, and sounds for your cat to adjust to! Some cats take no time at all in getting acclimated to a new home, while others may take weeks, or even months, to feel at ease. Give your cat plenty of privacy so she may adjust at her own pace, and allow her to explore the new surroundings on her own; do not force her into interacting with you. Provide her with easy access to a litter box, food and water, and a scratching post. Cats also feel secure in small spaces, so you may want to provide her with a cardboard box, a cat tunnel, or a cat tree with plenty of nooks in which she may hide!

Already Have a Cat?

Introducing cats to one another can be a delicate process. If you are adding to an already-established cat family at home, you want to ensure that your cats will all get along peacefully. Cat behaviorists recommend **slowly** introducing your current cats to your new cat. You can start by keeping them in separate rooms, if possible; this allows them to smell and hear one another without being over-stimulated or feeling threatened. One way of getting your cats used to each other is by rubbing a towel against each cat and then presenting it to the other, so they can get to know one another's scents. After a couple of days, you may introduce them to one another face-to-face – either with a screen barrier between them (a baby gate also works well) or with no barriers (but with attentive human supervision!). Be sure to have plenty of toys and treats available to offer your cats as rewards for good conduct!



**Contact us for advice:
info@reddoorshelter.org 773-764-2242**