



Welcome to the Sweet Paws Rescue Family!!

Homecoming

Bringing your kittens home is a thrilling experience for your family! However, it can be overwhelming for your kitten, as they are introduced to new people and surroundings. To make the transition easier, it's best to have a small room prepared ahead of time. We recommend that you use a guest bedroom, office, laundry room, bathroom, etc. so they can gradually get used to you and their new surroundings. Upon arriving home, place your pet in the litter box immediately after removing it from the carrier. This will help them learn where it is and they may need to use it right away after the drive home!

Exercise caution when granting access to the rest of your home, taking into consideration resident animals and your kittens' temperament. Transport from Mississippi, time at our quarantine facility, and moving to your home can be overwhelming for both kittens and adult cats. They may be scared, needy, or energetic from being confined at our facility. Let them settle in and adjust to their new surroundings slowly. If your kitten is feeling nervous, they may want to hide for a while. This is perfectly normal and okay! A box with a blanket can provide a cozy and secure hiding spot. Please limit noise and young children if your kittens are nervous. The first 24 hours should be a period of calm adjustment.

Because our kittens mostly come from foster homes, they tend to adapt easily to their new environment. However, some kittens may miss their mother and siblings, and as a result, they might be overly affectionate and crave your attention all the time. When you bring home a kitten, it's important to be patient as they will change a lot in the first few weeks. The kitten you meet on day one may be very different from the kitten you see on day 12. Getting to know the kitten in an environment they feel safe in is really important to enable a bond to be created. Kittens also need a lot of rest, so be sure to allow them some uninterrupted sleep time.

Litter box

A good rule of thumb is to have a litter box on each floor your cats will inhabit and to have one more than the number of cats in the home (i.e. if you have 2 cats, you should have 3 litter boxes). Remember that kittens are like toddlers -set them up for success

and make it as easy as possible for them. If your litter box is up a flight of stairs, a little kitten may not be able to make it in time. Also, like a toddler, if they are busy playing they may forget to make the trip, so we suggest reminding them once in a while.

When you expand your cat's space in your home and need to add another litter box we suggest following these guidelines. Cats are ruled by scent. Take your new litter box and fill it with the litter from your old litter box. Place this litter box in the spot that was used for litter box #1. Then fill your old litter box with litter, place it in the “new” spot, and show your kitten where it is. Be sure to scoop your litter box daily, as some cats don't like a dirty litter box. We recommend open-top litter boxes and unscented litter.

Microchip

Your kitten/cat was microchipped upon arrival at our facility. The chip has already been registered to your cat. After your adoption has been finalized you will receive an email with instructions on how to register the microchip in your name (if you don't see it, please check your SPAM folder or let us know). Petstablished/Wagtopia has a one-time fee of \$12.99 when you register the microchip in your name. You must register the chip, even though the cat will stay indoors! We see so many lost indoor cats that escaped accidentally through an open door or window. Keeping the information up to date on your microchip will ensure that if they are found, someone can contact you to be reunited with them.

Food

When you bring your new cat/kitten home, it is important to continue feeding it the same food it is used to. A sudden change in food can lead to stomach upset and also diarrhea. Unless you were told otherwise by your adoption coordinator, the kittens are currently eating Purina One Kitten (available at any grocery store) or Purina One Adult if adult, as that is what they are fed in the south. Dry food should be made available at all times. The wet food fed is typically Fancy Feast Kitten or Purina One Kitten (either is fine) or the adult versions of these brands. Kittens under 4 months should be fed wet food three to four times per day (about a 1/2 small can each time). Cats and kittens over 4 months can be fed wet food twice per day. Please feed your kitten up to one small can or 1/2 large can of wet food in the am and pm. Wet food is important as it's more nutrient-dense for young growing kittens. Fresh water should be available throughout the day and changed daily.

Health and Well Visits

Your cat was examined and cleared for transport by a veterinarian in AL/MS and again at our facility in MA to clear them for adoption. Your cat should be seen by your veterinarian for a wellness exam within 14 days of coming home. Please bring the folder with all of their health records to your first appointment. This visit is important so that your vet can review your cat's vaccination schedule, as well as check for signs of common illnesses that can be brought on by the stress of transport.

Your cat was prophylactically treated for intestinal parasites and was recently tested for parasites before transport. Despite this, it is not unusual for the stress of transport to rekindle dormant infections and parasites. If your cat was recently wormed you may also see dead worms in the stool. This is not a cause for alarm. Stress and food changes can also affect the gastrointestinal system and cause diarrhea and stomach upset. We recommend bringing a stool sample with you to your vet visit just in case. Upper respiratory infection can also occur in kittens and cats whose immune systems are weakened due to stress. Please pay attention to signs like sneezing, wheezing, lethargy, and yellow or green discharge from the nose and/or eyes. Contact your vet if you have concerns.

Vaccinations

Your cat has a Health Certificate in their folder which contains a record of any vaccines received before the date of their signed Health Certificate. If your cat received any vaccinations or medications after leaving our facility or after the date of their Health Certificate, the record will be on a separate medical record. Please bring all records (if applicable) to your well visit so that your vet is aware of your cat's full vaccination history.

Your kitten/cat will most likely require multiple vaccinations during their first year. Typically the FVRCP vaccine is given starting at age 4-8 weeks (depending on when they are rescued) with boosters every 3-4 weeks until the cat is 16 weeks old. Rabies is typically given after 16 weeks. Vaccinations are typically annually thereafter. All future vaccines are the responsibility of the adopter.

Resident Cat Introductions

We recommend that you keep your kitten/cat isolated from your resident cat for a period of 2 weeks. It is not unusual for a kitten to leave healthy and soon thereafter show signs of viral infection or GI issues. Transport, time spent at our facility, and a new home can stress vulnerable immune systems. This isolation period will allow your kitten to recover before meeting your cat, as well as help ensure your resident cat's continued health and wellness.

Cats are territorial creatures, and giving your new kitten/cat its own space to "own" upon arrival will help make the introduction to your resident cat less stressful, as they will feel some ownership of the space and be less likely to feel afraid when meeting their new cat sibling(s). Make sure to spend plenty of time with both your new addition, as well as with your resident cats during this time.

It is recommended that all cat introductions be done very slowly. We suggest getting the cats familiar with the scent of the other(s) before visual introductions. If there are any signs of aggression from either party, separate the cats and give them some more time before attempting to reintroduce them. It is common for some minor hissing and gentle swats to occur at the first meeting, anything beyond that is cause to slow down the introduction process. Make sure that for the first few meetings, both cats have an easy way to escape from the situation. If cats feel trapped, the stress is more likely to cause a negative reaction to their new sibling. Every cat behaves differently, so don't panic if your cats do not warm up to one another right away, even after slow introductions!

For more helpful tips on introducing cats to one another:

<https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/introducing-new-cat>

<https://www.americanhumane.org/fact-sheet/introducing-cats-to-cats/>