

atlanta hu♥ane society

Cat & Kitten Adoption Packet

Important information about the new addition to your family



Congratulations On Your New Cat!

We know how exciting it is to add a new cat to your family. Cats are creatures of habit and can become stressed as a result of change. Give your cat time to adjust to your home gradually, and do not be surprised if she spends the first few days or weeks hiding. Remember that if she is allowed to hide and come out at her own pace, she is doing what she needs to feel safe, and will be happier in your home as a result.

Commitment

Indoor cats can live 16-20 years or even longer. Your commitment to being a loving and responsible cat owner for the rest of your cat's life includes:

- Providing good food, clean water, medical care, and a safe, comfortable environment.
- Registering your cat's microchip with your contact information, and updating it if your contact info changes.
- Taking your cat with you when you move.
- Addressing any behavior or health issues that arise in a humane and timely manner.

Expense

The average yearly cost of caring for a cat can be anywhere from \$350 - \$1000+. Sudden illness or injury can require very expensive veterinary visits, so make sure that you are financially prepared for the unexpected. The Atlanta Humane Society offers a free 30 day pet insurance trial when you adopt.

Supplies

- Break-away collar and ID tags for safety
- Litter box, scooper, cat litter
- High-quality cat/kitten food. We recommend Purina brand.
- Scratching post or pad
- A variety of toys for play and exercise

Returns/Owner Surrender

It is our hope that your new cat will remain in your home for the rest of her life. However, if an issue arises with your cat, please contact us for advice as early as possible. If you are unable to keep your cat, the Atlanta Humane Society accepts returns of animals adopted from our shelter with a "no questions asked" policy. We strive to help animals stay in their homes, but we recognize that sometimes this is simply not possible. Please understand that returns are very stressful on cats and should be considered a last resort.

Stimulation and Socialization

House cats require stimulation to keep their minds and bodies healthy. Be sure to play with your cat (of any age) often. Play mimics hunting, which is a key component of feline instinct. Make sure that your cat has at least one spot to perch near a window and observe the world going by. Give them appropriate places to climb and perch. If your cat is resistant to touch, do not force her to endure more handling than she is comfortable with.

Indoor Cats

The Atlanta Humane Society strongly recommends keeping cats indoors only. Indoor cats are safer, healthier, and have longer life spans (16-20 years vs. 3-5 years for outdoor cats).

Outdoor and Indoor/Outdoor Cats Can Face The Following Risks:

- Being hit and injured or killed by a car
- Ingesting deadly poisons, such as antifreeze or pesticides or eating animals that have ingested poisons
- Being chased, attacked or killed by a roaming dog, cat, or wild animal
- Being bullied out of the territory by a dominant neighborhood cat
- Contracting a disease, such as FIV, Feline Leukemia or rabies from a stray cat or other animal
- Becoming lost and unable to find the way home
- Being stolen or encountering someone with cruel intentions
- Being mistaken for a stray animal and take to local animal control

PLEASE DO NOT DECLAW YOUR CAT

Your cat's claws are used for balance, exercise, climbing and stretching. Declawing is not the same as having your fingernails trimmed. Declawing involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. If performed on a human being, it would be like cutting off each of your fingers at the last knuckle. The surgery can cause medical and behavioral problems, and it is so painful that it has been used in studies to investigate methods of pain relief.

Problems That Often Arise From Declawing Include:

- Damage to the radial nerve, and painful re-growth of the deformed claw inside the paw
- Weakening of shoulder, leg, and back muscles
- Painful arthritis
- Changing of the shape of a cat's feet, which can make it painful to walk
- Increased vulnerability to predators and other territorial cats while outdoors
- Personality changes: cats often become nervous, fearful and aggressive
- Declawed cats often become compulsive biters
- Inappropriate elimination caused by pain of digging in the litter box

Declawing is an unnecessary surgery that provides no medical benefit to the cat. Educated pet parents can easily train their cats to use their claws in a manner that allows everyone in the household to live together happily.

- Keep their claws trimmed to minimize damage to household items.
- Provide stable scratching posts around your home. Use toys and catnip to entice your cat to use them.
- Try Soft Paws:® soft plastic caps that are glued to the cat's nails by a veterinarian.
- Attach a special tape (like Sticky Paws®) to furniture to deter your cat from unwanted scratching.