

**CONGRATULATIONS ON ADOPTING
FROM CHARLIE’S ANGELS ANIMAL SANCTUARY, INC.
WHAT’S NEXT?**

GET READY FOR YOUR NEW CAT!

This is a very exciting time and you are getting a new cat! To assist you in preparing for your new family member, please take a moment to review the following tips.

Create a Sanctuary Room

We strongly recommend that you choose a quiet room that will become the “sanctuary room” for kitty. Try to choose a room with secure windows that does not have any hiding spots where you can’t reach kitty (like under large pieces of furniture). Set up food and water bowls at an opposite corner of the room from the litter box. Make sure there are plenty of toys and a comfortable and safe hiding spot — such as a box or cat carrier with the door removed.

Watch out for these key items when creating your cat’s sanctuary:

- Cords, strings and even rubber bands
- Open doors or windows
- Cleaning materials, insecticides, etc.,
- Breakable objects
- Block access to places kitty might get stuck (like behind the washer and dryer).

Cat Foods and Feeding: We will give you a sample of the dry food that your cat has been eating at Charlie’s Angels Animal Sanctuary, Inc. We encourage you to continue this food due to its nutritional content. However, if you decided to change, mix the new food in slowly with the old food to help your cat with any digestive issues.

Please be aware, if you have another cat in the house, make sure both cats are getting an equal amount of nutrition and one is not eating the other cats’ food.

- Cats should always have free access to water.
- Your new cat also will need separate food and water dishes. They should be kept far away from the litterbox area to avoid contamination. Cats may reject old food or stale water. Food & water dishes are recommended to be stainless steel or ceramic. Plastic bowls can result in chin acne in cats.

Litterbox and Litter: Your cat must have access to a clean litter box at all times. Most cats will instinctively use a litter box. Unscented, fine-textured litter is preferred by the majority of cats. Your cat is used to Tidy Cat Unscented Clumping cat litter. Keep in mind that kittens will need a box that’s low enough for them to enter easily. Kittens should NOT have clumping litter. If they ingest any of the litter it will “clump” inside their belly.

Be sure to keep the litter box clean by scooping the litter at least daily. Cats may avoid a litterbox area that isn't clean. Also, providing just one litterbox may not be sufficient. Animal behaviorists suggest providing as many boxes as you have cats, plus one. For example, if you have two cats, you should have three litter boxes.

Prepare the House and Family: Ground Rules and Safety Precautions

Prepare your Family: Although adopting a new cat is exciting, all family members must be prepared for the fact that kitty is going to need some patience and space in acclimating to a new environment. Make sure everyone agrees to give kitty some space for a few days while it gets used to its new space and new family. Loud voices and the urge to snuggle your new cat should be overridden with consideration for the stress level of the new cat.

Teach the children to approach the cat gently and respectfully. Don't allow the children to hug the cat or put their face near them – instead, teach them to pet the cat underneath his chin. Children should never be allowed to crawl on the cat, pull his tail or ears, pick up, or “ride” the cat. One child at a time should interact with the cat.

Have a “**safe**” area where your kitty can go if they want to take a break from the children

Set Clear Rules: Make sure everyone understands how important it is to close all **windows and doors**. Even if your current cat doesn't dart out an open door, that does not mean every cat will react the same way.

Prepare your home: Cats and kittens are notorious for chewing on things. Even many adult cats will check out their surroundings by tasting. It's best to put safety first when you bring a cat of any age into your home. Cell phone charger cords are particularly attractive to some cats.

Poisonous Plants: Cats like to chew on grass and plants and many are dangerous and even deadly to cats. Even non-poisonous plants can cause vomiting and diarrhea. If your cat likes green stuff, purchase or grow your own cat grass.

Lock up your cleaning supplies. Some have a very attractive taste to a curious kitten.

Look inside the dryer before closing the door, and keep it closed when not in use. Cats love to hole up in dark, quiet places, which can be a recipe for a tragedy. Kittens often climb into refrigerators, freezers, and dresser drawers, so check these, too, before closing them.

Bringing Your Cat Home

Carrier: Always bring your new cat or kitten home in a secure carrier. If you do not have one, we sell them in the café.

Pet Introductions: Ignore your current pet's curiosity upon the arrival of your new furry family member, and proceed (with cat in carrier) to the sanctuary room. Allow your new cat a few days to adjust before introducing them to your existing pets.

Introduce Cat to Its Room: Open the carrier in a corner and leave the room, allowing your cat to come out of the carrier at its own speed to explore its new territory. Some cats will walk out of the carrier and make themselves at home within minutes. Others will take a few hours or even days before they feel comfortable. **Please check on your new furry friend every few hours.**

What to Expect in the First 24 Hours

Behavior: Hiding is to be expected so do not be surprised if you see little of the cat during the first 24 hours. It's also common for a new cat to not want to eat or use the litter box in the first 24+ hours in a

new home as they are experiencing a lot of change. Be guided by your cat's comfort level. If it is out and about in the sanctuary room, take some time to sit on the floor with it or play with a toy. Do not overwhelm the cat by allowing too many family members in at once.

Venturing Outside of the Sanctuary Room

Assess Readiness: Spend time with your new cat in its sanctuary space. If the cat appears to be confident and looking for human interaction, then allow other family members to come in. Usually after a few days you will sense that the cat feels safe in its room. If this is the case, open the door and let it explore the rest of the house — under supervision. If your house is very large, consider opening up one floor of the house, or letting kitty have more run of the house only when you are home. You do not want your cat to get lost in an unfamiliar environment and not find her way back to the litterbox.

Cat Collars: Your cat has a microchip when they are adopted from Charlie's Angels Animal Sanctuary, Inc. However, if you choose to use a collar and identification tag as well, **please use a "breakaway" collar.** They are sturdy, but will hopefully unclasp or break if the cat is caught and struggles.

Indoor cats don't wear down their claws as quickly as outdoors ones do, so they can overgrow. Untrimmed claws can grow into a cat's paw pads, leading to infection, pain, and difficulty walking and using the litter box. Check your cat's claws every couple of weeks to see if they need to be trimmed. *Trimming claws is easy.* Please ask for a demonstration if you are unfamiliar with how to do it.

We do not want our cats declawed. Declawing involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. If performed on a human being, it would be like cutting off each finger at the last knuckle. It provides no medical benefit to the cat and can lead to health and behavioral issues.

Scratching Posts are a great investment for your home, as they will give your cat a place to scratch instead of using your furniture. Most cats prefer a vertical post, covered in sisal rope, with a large base so they can get a good workout without making the post tip over. Corrugated cardboard scratchers are also a good option. Cats can really get their claws in to both sisal and cardboard. Scratching posts with carpet may encourage your cat to scratch your carpets or rugs and should be avoided.

Watch for **signs of stress in the cat.** Cats don't all show the same signs when it comes to stress and they can be easy to overlook.

Signs of stress may include:

- loss of appetite
- excessive grooming (which may result in a condition known as psychogenic alopecia)
- less interaction with family members
- hiding
- change in the relationship with companion cats
- elimination outside of the litter box
- aggression

Your Relationship with your Veterinarian

Find someone you really like and respect! We already have and your cat has seen Dr. Morefield at Caring Heart Animal Hospital. Please feel free to continue that relationship or use your own veterinarian.