



# Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County

9700 Uva Drive, Redwood Valley, CA 95470

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## Cat Care Guide

### Food

- Feed your cat a brand of food that is **nutritionally appropriate for their age**. Kittens up to a year old should be fed kitten food and cats older than one year should be fed adult food.
- Fresh water must be provided at all times and should be in a convenient place for your cat.
- Store open canned food properly to avoid spoilage.
- **Do not give your cat cow's milk. Felines are lactose intolerant and will become sick if they drink it!**
- Treats are tasty and fun but be careful not to overdo it. There are extra sugars and fats in the treats that can affect your cat's health negatively.

### Bedding/Housing

- Your cat should have a clean, dry place to rest and sleep. This should also be a place where the cat can get away from other pets and people to relax safely.
- Wash your cat's bedding often, this will help to keep your cat healthy!
- An indoor cat's average life expectancy is 20 years! An outdoor cat's average life expectancy is only 3 to 5 years. They are not exposed to predators, cars or the neighborhood dogs if they live indoors only! Consider this when making the choice of where your cat will live! Outdoor enclosures are an option. They provide the stimulation of being outside without the danger!
- **If you must let your cat outside, be sure to keep your cat inside for the first 2-4 weeks that you have it!** During this time your cat will be adjusting to its new environment. Home is where the food is and 2-4 weeks is the average adjustment time that is necessary for the cat to recognize where to stay. If you do not keep your cat in for the minimum time your cat may run away and become disoriented and lost.

### Litter Box

- When you are bringing a new cat into your home, be sure to **show the cat where you have placed the litter box as well as the food and water**. Your cat's litter box should be in a quiet, accessible location such as a spare room.
- To prevent unnecessary messes, show the cat where its litter box is and let them get used to the smell of the placement. **If you move the litter box show your cat where it is**. This will help them continue to use it in the new location instead of returning to where it was located and using that place as the litter box!
- Cats will not use a messy or dirty litter box. Be sure to clean the litter at least once a day. **Sometimes cats prefer their own litter box. If you have more than one cat it can be important to have multiple boxes or they may go outside the box.**

### Grooming

- ***Cats rarely need baths*** unless prescribed by a veterinarian. In some cases they may require a gentle cleansing shampoo if they get into something gross!
- Brush your cat regularly. This cuts down shedding and can help prevent hairballs and matting. ***This is very important for cats with long hair!***
- While grooming, take the opportunity to check your cat for wounds, ticks, fleas and flea dirt. ***Flea dirt is the black dust left over from fleas.*** Also look in your cat's ears, if it looks like there is dirt in there have it checked by your vet. Ear mites are very itchy and can cause damage to your cats' ears!
- **It is important to provide Flea and tick preventative** (topical or oral) that may be purchased at your local vet. **Fleas carry parasites such as tapeworms** (tapeworms look like rice in the stool).



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## Identifying Your Cat

- If you allow your cat to go outside it is important to have identification such as a **break away collar** and ID tag on your cat as well as a microchip. Microchips are an effective way to get your cat safely home, please ask for more information! **All HSMC cats are microchipped!**
- If your cat gets lost, these steps will help ensure that you find your cat,

## Play

- Cats are very active and playful creatures. It is their instinct to stalk and hunt. An active cat is a happy cat! Interactive toys are great for you and your cat!
- Refrain from using your fingers as the toy to play with your cat, doing this with a kitten is fun because it doesn't hurt, but this play can encourage bad habits and will allow your cat to think that attacking your hands is allowed all the time.

## Scratching

- **Your cat needs to scratch on things!** When they scratch things the outer nail sheath is pulled off in order for their nails to grow. It makes your cat more comfortable to be able to scratch on something to shave off these unwanted bits of nail.
- Provide your cat with something sturdy like a scratching post. This post should be at least 3 feet high so your cat can stretch out while scratching and stable enough not to wobble. It should be made out of rough fibers. This will help keep your cat away from your couch and drapes!

## Health

- To ensure that your cat is healthy, you should take him/her to the veterinarian at least once a year. During this time you can get any necessary vaccinations and flea and tick preventative.

- **Vaccinating your cat is very important!** These vaccinations can save your cat from Rabies, FeLV, Panleukopenia among other illnesses.
- **If your cat appears sick or injured be sure to take him to the vet immediately!**

## Cat Supply Check List

- ✓ Cat Food
- ✓ Food Dish
- ✓ Water Bowl
- ✓ Interactive Toys
- ✓ Brush
- ✓ Break-away cat collar and ID Tag
- ✓ Scratching post
- ✓ Litter box and Litter
- ✓ Cat Carrier
- ✓ Cat Bed or box with blankets

## Do not feed your cat:

- ✓ Alcoholic Beverages
- ✓ Chocolate
- ✓ Coffee
- ✓ Milk
- ✓ Grapes, Raisins or Avocado
- ✓ Moldy or Spoiled Food
- ✓ Onions, Garlic or Chives
- ✓ Poultry Bones
- ✓ Salty Foods or Macadamia Nuts
- ✓ Tomato Leaves, Stems or Unripe Fruit
- ✓ Yeast Dough
- ✓ Human medicines **unless prescribed by a vet.**