

## **Your New Cat**

### Scent and Environment

Cats use scent to bond to their environment. For this reason, we try to send familiar items from their Humane Society enclosures home with them, such as their cardboard scratchers and bedding. These items can ease their transition into a new home.

Most cats dislike change and will need time to adjust to the sights, sounds, smells, people, and other animals in their new home. In the beginning they may exhibit shy or distance-increasing behavior such as hissing or swatting. Gradually, as they begin to feel safe, they will exhibit more confidence and come out to socialize. The best way to accelerate the adjustment process is to confine your new cat in a small room or bathroom (with access to food, water and litter) for the first week or two. Give them the chance to approach at their own pace. Getting on their level, speaking in a soft voice, and offering treats can help!

The stress of environment change can also cause cats to stop eating. If you notice your cat isn't eating, try sitting beside them and repeatedly tossing kibble in front of them - making food "move" can draw interest! Since cats can develop life threatening liver damage after 2 days without food, it's important to introduce more high-value options, such as tuna or treats, if necessary.

### Litter boxes: Best Practices

Upon giving your cat full access to their new home, make sure they have access to at least two, uncovered, unlined litter boxes. The litter boxes should be at least 1.5 times the length of the cat for comfortable use. Place them in separate, open areas of the home. Cats tend to prefer litter box placement away from loud noises but near their people. Avoid placing litter boxes in closets or other tight spaces where your cat could be ambushed by small children or other pets. Basements should also be avoided unless they are living spaces where people regularly congregate. To further set your cat up for success, use unscented, clumping litter and scoop their boxes daily.

## Introducing your new cat to other cats

This is another area where a confinement period can be helpful. Throwing your pets together right away is a recipe for disaster. Instead, keep your new cat in that small room or bathroom so they have a chance to get used to the sounds and smells of other animals before coming face to face with them. During confinement, you can swap your cats' beds or blankets to familiarize each with the other's smell. Once your new cat is doing well and eating regularly while confined, you can let them out to explore the rest of the home while other pets are confined in the new cat's room. This switch allows another way for them to experience each other's scents and it helps your new cat to get used to new surroundings without being scared by other pets. The first face-to-face meeting should occur naturally. You can expect the cats to sniff each other and hiss. Any further aggression or fighting is indication that they need more time apart. Cats are territorial and generally dislike sharing their territory. If you're lucky, they will grow to cuddle and groom each other. More likely, they'll be able to peacefully coexist after a few weeks of minor conflict.

## Scratching

Scratching is an instinctive behavior that helps cats stretch and shed the outer layers of their claws. Provide appropriate spots for your cat to scratch, as it's in their nature. Horizontal cardboard scratchers are inexpensive and can double as beds. Vertical scratchers should be placed in socially significant areas near furniture. It's very important that scratching posts are sturdy! You can apply catnip or catnip spray to attract your cat to the scratchers.

If you're worried about your furniture, you may also consider:

- Sticky Paws or double sided tape: Inconspicuous adhesive products applied to furniture to prevent your cat from scratching it
- Nail trims: Regularly trimming your cat's nails keeps them shorter and less sharp. This in turn can prevent your cat from scratching.
- Feliway: A synthetic feel-good pheromone that can be sprayed onto surfaces you don't want your cat to scratch.
- Soft Paws: As a last resort, plastic covers can be applied to your cat's nails to prevent unwanted scratching.

## Enrichment

If cats don't get the enrichment they need, they may become rambunctious and demand attention in the middle of the night. Or, they may eat out of boredom and become overweight. Once your new cat is used to their new home and eating regularly, portion their food into 2 daily meals. For extra mental stimulation, you can give meals in food puzzles (which can be bought at pet supply stores) or you can "hide" kibble around the house (ex. on windowsills, in toilet paper rolls or paper bags) for them to forage.

Cats of all ages need to play! Offer toys of different textures and rotate them - cats tend to get bored when the same toys are always left out. Use interactive play to encourage exercise: move a wand toy as prey would move and allow your cat to catch it. Avoid the wands with large toys on the end - these can be scary and your cat might not want to get too close to them. If you have a particularly energetic cat, you should play with them before their evening meal and then again before bed.

Jumping and climbing are natural cat behaviors. If you don't want them jumping on your counters or climbing your furniture, give them furniture of their own. Make sure to place cat trees and shelves in socially significant areas where you regularly hang out and make sure these structures are sturdy.

# Information for Adopters: Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

*Some of this information provided courtesy of Dr. Stacy Cannon, Nashville Metro Animal Care and Control & ASPCA.*

## Facts About Feline URI

Feline URI is similar to the common cold in humans. It's caused by a virus, and stressful environments and situations factor in as well. With supportive care and rest in a quiet, calm place like a loving home, most cases resolve in 7-14 days.



## Signs of URI

- Sneezing
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Red, swollen or runny eyes or squinting
- Coughing or hard swallowing
- Sores (ulcers) on the tongue, lips, nose, or roof of mouth
- Fever, lack of appetite, hiding and/or decreased energy

## URI Treatment Plan

Just like with humans, viral infections aren't cured by antibiotics, even though they might be used for bacterial infections. A cat with URI should be separated from other cats in the household and put in a quiet space where he can recover in a low-stress setting. The cat can gradually be introduced to people and other animals in the household once he's recovered.

## In-Home Care for URI

- A low-stress room is necessary for the cat to rest, acclimate and recover
- Make sure the cat is eating (when cats get stuffy noses, they can't smell their food well) so offer canned food, warmed gently in the microwave to stimulate appetite
- Gently clean discharge from nose and eyes with a warm moist cloth at least once daily
- Administer any prescribed medications as directed by your veterinarian

**NOTE:** ALWAYS wash hands after handling sick cats.

## When to Call a Veterinarian

Contact your veterinarian if your cat has any of the following signs:

- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose
- Difficulty breathing, especially panting or breathing through an open mouth
- Depressed or unresponsive
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home care

# Michelson Found Animals Registry

[www.found.org](http://www.found.org)

Thank you for protecting your pet with a microchip! This animal care organization is going to link your email address and other contact info to the chip in the free **Michelson Found Animals Registry!** *If you don't use email, ask a friend or family member if you can use theirs to register your pet.*

## What you'll need to do:

- **Look out for a welcome email** from the Michelson Found Animals Registry - you'll use it to log in to your account and confirm that the info sent to us was entered correctly (typos *are* common!).
- **Keep your registration up-to-date** so that we can reach you via calls, texts, and emails if your pet is ever lost and found.
- Visit **[found.org/resources](http://found.org/resources)** for instructions on updating your info, adding pets, and much more (it's *always* free!).
- Keep your pet's **microchip card** in your wallet or with their other medical/adoption paperwork in a safe place.

If you don't get a welcome email from us within a week, first check your spam folder, and then visit [www.found.org](http://www.found.org) and click "Contact Us" for help.

Best,

**The Michelson Found Animals Registry Team**

# COMMON ILLNESSES IN CATS

## Diarrhea

Diarrhea can result from change of food/environment, stress, or underlying medical issues. Consult with your primary Veterinarian as this may require their attention.

## Feline Distemper (Panleukopenia)

Feline distemper is a very contagious virus that causes fever, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, and commonly results in death. The virus can be transported from cat to cat by toys, bedding, and even our clothing or hands. Proper vaccination and an indoor lifestyle are a cat's best defense against this virus.

## Upper Respiratory Virus (URI)

Sneezing, coughing, nasal congestion, inflamed/watery eyes, loss of appetite, lethargy, and sometimes mouth ulcers are all symptoms of an upper respiratory infection. There are many viruses that can cause these symptoms and sometimes a cat can be infected with more than one virus at a time. All of them are very contagious. Did you know that a cat's sneeze can travel up to four feet? Since these symptoms are caused by viruses, antibiotics are only used when a secondary bacterial infection is suspected. A properly vaccinated cat is protected against some of these viruses. In severe cases, hospitalization with IV fluids can be required.

In their incubation stage, viruses are not detectable. Therefore, an adopted animal may look healthy on the day of adoption and begin to show symptoms of his illness a few days later – at your home.

# 7-Day Food Swap



70% OLD FOOD  
30% NEW FOOD



50% OLD FOOD  
50% NEW FOOD



25% OLD FOOD  
75% NEW FOOD



75% OLD FOOD  
25% NEW FOOD



60% OLD FOOD  
40% NEW FOOD



40% OLD FOOD  
60% NEW FOOD



100% NEW FOOD



Register your pet today!

Share this to save lives!  
@FindingRover #FindingRover

[www.FindingRover.com](http://www.FindingRover.com)

Dear Adopters,

Our shelter strives to find innovative ways to keep pets in our community safe so we are very excited to announce our new partnership with Finding Rover!

Finding Rover uses facial recognition technology to help reunite lost dogs and cats with their families, allowing anyone with computer access to be a superhero.

If you FIND a stray dog or cat, all you need to do is click 'I Found a Pet', snap a picture on your phone, and upload to [www.findingrover.com](http://www.findingrover.com). From there the magic of Finding Rover will match that photo with photos of pets that have been reported missing.

For those that have LOST a dog or cat, click 'I Lost a Pet', upload your pet's picture, and Finding Rover will search found reports which will include animals in our care. Our partnership automatically updates all of our shelter's pets on our Finding Rover page!

Wondering why you should use this new technology? Here are our top five reasons:

1. It's easy! Anyone with a smartphone or computer can upload a lost or found dog or cat instantly.
2. It's FREE! Although millions of dollars have been invested into this technology, it doesn't cost them a penny.
3. It helps find pets homes! It's not just about helping lost pets. Our dogs and cats that are Available for Adoption are also on Finding Rover!
4. It's not just for dogs! Dogs aren't the only pets that get out. Finding Rover is optimized to work for our feline friends as well.
5. It saves lives! At our shelter, our number one goal is to keep pets safe before they even reach our doors. Using this tool, we can all become superheroes and help keep our shelter empty.

So what's the catch? It only works if we all use it!

We highly encourage everyone to register with a personal Finding Rover account so we can keep our entire community safe. Don't wait for your pet to go missing; be proactive and create an account for your pet today. Isn't your pet's safety worth two minutes of your time?

All you need to do is visit <https://findingrover.com/registermypet>

1. Upload a picture
2. Enter your pet's name, age, and breed
3. Enter your name, email address, and zip code

Help our community become the number one user of this new technology. If we all do our small part, it will make a big difference for the lives of the animals in our community. Share Finding Rover with your family and friends and let's get everyone on board to start saving more lives!

## **Cats Need Claws!**

Humane Society of West Michigan celebrates claws! If you are thinking about having your cat declawed, consider that cats need their claws for the following reasons:

- A cat's graceful sense of balance is due in part to her claws which help establish footing for walking, running, jumping, climbing, or stretching
- Cats have a strong instinct to mark their territory. Scratching allows them to express the scent glands on their paw pads. The scent they deposit by scratching cannot be detected by humans but it comforts the cat and helps her communicate with other cats
- Cats get itchy! Claws are useful for scratching itches
- Claws are a cat's primary defense
- Scratching helps cats shed the outer layers of their claws
- Scratching relieves anxiety

Along with leading animal welfare organizations, HSWM highly discourages declawing as it can negatively impact the long-term health or behavior of your cat. Declawing is the amputation of the last bone of each toe. If performed on a human, it would be like cutting off each finger at the last knuckle. Imagine trying to navigate your life after having ten fingertip amputations - it would change you, just as declawing can change a cat. Removing a cat's ability to scratch is stressful and they may respond to that stress with undesirable behavioral issues. Medical complications that may result include abscesses, painful bone spurs and regrowth of a deformed claw. Over time, some declawed cats develop arthritis or back pain due to their unnatural gait.

It's easy to train cats to scratch appropriately as long as you provide them with alternatives to your furniture! Horizontal cardboard scratchers are inexpensive and can double as beds. Vertical scratching posts can help your cat stretch - just make sure they're tall (at least 2 ft.) and sturdy. When it comes to placement, don't tuck those scratching posts away in a back corner! Cats need multiple scratching surfaces in socially significant areas near your furniture and in front of windows. There are even scratching pads designed to fit on or around your furniture. Additionally, you could apply "Sticky Paws" or other inconspicuous adhesive products to your furniture to protect it from being scratched.

Clipping your cat's claws may also prevent unwanted scratching and it will prevent your cat's claws from growing too long and piercing their paw pads. For instructions, visit [www.humanesociety.org/resources/trimming-cats-claws](http://www.humanesociety.org/resources/trimming-cats-claws)