• Supervise, supervise and supervise every interaction!

• Do not allow your kids to be rough with the cat- instead, have them scratch the cat on its head and face only.

• Do not scratch a cat on its belly or pull its tail.

• It is best if kids do not pick up the cat or squeeze too tightly.

• Do not let kids crowd or corner the cat.

• Do not have visiting children until the cat has settled.

• Do not let the kids try to pull a cat out of a hiding spot.

• Never let kids chase a cat or grab for a running cat.

• Teach kids to carefully LET GO if the cat struggles in their arms.

Preparing Your Home

Before you bring your new cat or kitten home, it is important to “kitty proof” (for his safety as well as that of your belongings) and to purchase a few basic supplies. Here is a quick check list to get you started:

Prepare a safe room, such as a bathroom or small spare bedroom, for your new cat’s first few nights. Place the litter box at one end with the food and water dishes and bed at the other. Allow your cat lots of time to adjust, and initially, when you’re away and at night, keep the cat in their safe place. (If it is your bathroom, remember to close the toilet lid!).

Many plants are poisonous to animals, so do a thorough check of your home before bringing home your new cat. Here is a list of some of the most common household plants that are toxic: Amaryllis, Azalea, Baby’s Breath, Bird of Paradise, Calla Lilly, Cyclamen, Daffodil, Dieffenbachia, Easter Lily, Eucalyptus, Mistletoe, Narcissus, Oleander, Peace Lily, Primrose, Philodendron, Tiger Lily, and Tomato plant.
Help reduce potential human allergies by getting a good HEPA air cleaner and vacuuming frequently. Remember, cats are naturally curious, like to explore and can get on top of most anything. It is a good idea to put away breakables that may be knocked off a shelf by an exploring kitty. It’s as easy as closing door to a room.

Have the following supplies on hand:

- **Litter box and Litter**
  
  You will want to experiment to find the litter your cat prefers. There are many different kinds of litter to choose from, but in studies most cats prefer non-scented fine clumping litter.

- **Food**
  
  We feed and recommend feeding a high quality dry food.

- **Food and Water Dishes**
  
  Avoid plastic dishes, they harbor bacteria. Make sure food and water dishes aren’t placed near the litter box.

- **Safety Collar and ID Tag**
  
  Even indoor-only kitties need to wear a collar and ID tag.

- **Nail Clippers and Other Grooming Supplies**
  
  A flea comb and a brush are needed to keep your kitty beautiful. Hairball medication should be in your supply drawer if your cat has medium to long hair.

- **Safe Toys**
  
  Cats love to chase and hunt down toys. Avoid those with small parts that can break off and be ingested. Also avoid yarn, string and curling ribbon as these will cause problems inside your cat’s digestive tract if swallowed.

- **Scratching Post**
  
  This will give your cat an appropriate place to do what comes naturally. Scratching not only helps kitty shed the sheath of his claws, but also marks territory. Try a post that will allow your cat to get a full stretch. Post materials vary—rope, carpet, wood—so find one your cat likes.
The Ride Home

Many cats do not like traveling. Here are some tips that will help your cat have a safe and calm time during the ride home.

Keep your new cat in his carrier no matter how much he is crying—it is the ONLY safe way to transport your pet. Have an adult carry the cat in its carrier to your vehicle to eliminate “swinging” of the carrier. Use a seat belt or tether to secure the carrier in your car.

Do not allow children to tease or excite the cat. Have them keep their hands and fingers to themselves! Never allow them to open the carrier to pet the cat.

Do not leave the cat in the car unattended, even for a short stop to shop. Cats can over-heat very quickly. Buy your supplies before taking the cat home.

Keep the cat in the carrier until you are safely inside your home (of the cat’s safe room if there are other pets in the home) with the doors shut. Once home, the cat will need time and quiet place to settle.

The First Few Days

Your new cat is embarking on a journey to a fun and wonderful life. You are aware of all the joys that lie ahead, but your cat does not know what is happening. The first few days can be very uncertain for your cat. Be patient and take things slowly.

Please review the information provided to you by HSWM, paying particular attention to any information given by the previous owner of your new cat. Schedule a veterinary examination within 10 days of adoption and the beginning of integrating your new kitty into your household.

A frightened or unsure cat’s tendency is to hide. Let her do that and know that she will eventually become comfortable and come out. Under no circumstances should you force a cat from her hiding place by pulling her legs or other body party. Coax her out gently with food or a toy, or leave her alone for now.

What to Expect While Settling In

Do not be alarmed if your new cat exhibits any of the following behaviors in the first few days.

- Not eating
- Sniffing everything
- Upset tummy, vomiting, loose stools
- Hiding (sometimes for days)
- Not using the litter box (see litter box training)
Things You Can Do To Help

Be calm, be patient. At first, keep your cat in a small room, such as the bathroom (make sure the toilet lid is down!), with the litter box at one end of the room and food and water and a bed at the other, to give him time to adjust. Gradually give your cat more freedom as he successfully goes back to and uses his litter box. Allow several weeks for your cat to adjust.

Keep your cat indoors. Check for open windows and loose screens, as a frightened cat could easily break out. It can take weeks or even months for your new cat to feel at home.

Never drag your cat out of hiding. Use a lure such as food or a toy to encourage your cat to come out.

Provide plenty of fresh water and high quality food. Initially, keep your new cat separated from other pets. (See introducing your new cat). It is best not to introduce your kitten/cat to your home during very busy times such as birthdays and holidays. If you do, provide them with a quiet area away from the action and limit over-handling of the new cat. Cats get bored, so provide lots of fun toys, perches and social interactions with you to help your cat adjust. If you have a windowsill with a view of the yard, open the curtain or blinds so your cat can get a view of the outside world.

Feeding Time

HSWM encourages feeding a high quality dry food—use wet food for treats or if there is an illness. Talk with your veterinarian about dietary requirements.

What to Eat?

Kittens (under 1 year)

Feed high quality, dry kitten food that is high in nutrients and low in magnesium ash (which may contribute to urinary disorders). NOTE: very young kittens may tire of eating dry food so you may want to supplement with a quality canned food if your kitten is less than two pounds.

Dry food helps to clean teeth and, if nutritionally complete, can be the bulk of the kitten’s diet.

Dry food can be left out for the day so the kitten can eat when hungry.

Supplement with canned food if the cat needs more protein for growth.

Fresh water should be available at all times in a spill proof, clean bowl.

Limit “moist meal” or fish.

Do not give cow’s milk, as it causes diarrhea.

Clean food and water dishes thoroughly every day.
Adult Cats (over 1 year)

Feed high quality adult maintenance dry food.

Feed two scheduled meals per day. Free feeding of high quality dry food may work but can lead to obesity in some cats.

Discard any food left after 24 hours before cleaning and refilling the dish. Follow amount guidelines on the pet food bag. Monitor your cat’s weight and adjust food portions accordingly. If you cannot feel his ribs, he may be overweight, a condition that can lead to serious health problems. Check into pet food brands that have a low-cal option.

Fresh water should be available at all times.

Where to Feed

Place the cat’s food and water dishes in a safe, quiet place, where she can eat without being disturbed by other pets, children or loud noises such as the laundry. The feeding place should be far from the litter box (which should have its own calm and quiet location).