

going up there. Never yell at her or punish her. This will only make her learn to fear you.

## Vet Care

It's a good idea to get your new pet checked over by your own vet sometime after arriving home and yearly thereafter. The first visit will establish a baseline for your cat's health that the vet can compare with future observations; for example, if she gains or loses significant weight. Changes in her appetite, litter pan habits, or behaviour are always a sign that something's going on. But animals instinctively hide signs of illness or injury to avoid alerting predators which go for weak animals first. So it may not always be immediately evident if your cat needs help.

The North American veterinary schools are changing their protocols for vaccinating dogs and cats to reflect the finding that a modified live virus vaccine given after six months of age produces immunity for the life of the pet. So yearly boosters wouldn't be needed but yearly check ups can help avoid future problems and help ensure a long, happy relationship with your furry friend.

## The Adjustment Period

How long will it be before your new pet is a fully integrated member of the family? That varies with the animal, the family and the home. Some waltz in and make themselves at home in no time. Other more sensitive or timid pets need as much as two or three months to begin to bond, maybe longer. You'll be advised about the cat's general temperament when you're adopting. If she's timid, you'll need a bit more patience. But

they're worth the wait. When the day comes that she chirrup a greeting and rubs against your legs, it will mean that much more.

## The Rescue Process

We hope you understand that Katie's Place is only the first step in the rescue process. You, as the new family, are the last step.

All of our cats are spayed/neutered, tattooed or microchipped, given their F3 vaccines, and FIV/FelLV tested (kittens under the age of six months cannot be tested). However, the FIV/FelLV tests can give inaccurate results. Financially we are unable to give second FIV/FelLV tests or give the feline leukemia and rabies vaccinations. This you may do following adoption if you wish.

We try to maintain a clean, healthy environment but many of our cats were homeless. This means they sometimes come into the shelter with fleas, worms, ear mites, colds or a minor skin fungal infections (ring-



*In a real home, a shy cat can eventually become a playful, loving pet. Kahlua's family said, "Kahlua used to be very afraid and she is just a beautiful, warm, loving cat now."*

worm). These are all treated as we find them though it takes daily vigilance. None of these conditions are life threatening and all are easily treatable. Please keep in mind there are, at times, more than 125 animals to monitor. We're all volunteers doing the best we can. In a busy shelter with animals coming and going, a flea or mite could escape detection and take hold on vulnerable animals.

When you provide a home for a homeless animal you become part of the rescue process and, as a rescuer, you may also need to address some minor health or behavioural issue that comes up as they adjust to their new lives. We've solved many such issues at the shelter and would be happy to give you tips or guidance in solving any that may arise with your new pet. We just ask that you give him a reasonable period to settle and become a healthy, happy family member.

We believe rescuing abandoned and unwanted animals is a team effort and we're grateful to you for joining the team. We're certain that once your rescued animal settles into your home, it will capture your heart as it captured ours.

## Remember

Call us with any questions or concerns. We're willing to help. But, as things sometimes don't work out no matter how diligent the effort being made, the animal must come back to us if you can't keep him. We have committed to the animals we rescue for the rest of their lives.

The photos in this flyer are of adopted Katie's Place pets. Their families sent us their photos.

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# Introducing Your New Family Member



**Katie's Place**  
Animal Shelter

604-463-7917

info@katieplaceshelter.com  
katieplaceshelter.com

## Arriving home

It's a day to celebrate when you bring home a new furry family member. But on this first day, your new pet may have a different point of view. They're locked in a carrier and taken from what they considered home to a new place where they don't know anyone. Some cats will look around, wide-eyed and cautious, but many cats just want to hide. This is normal. You can ease the transition by setting them up in a small room of their own with litter pan, food, water, and bed. The carrier they came home in can serve as their bed. Spend some time with them and then carry on with your day. They'll hear the sounds of the household, and their noses will work overtime as they assimilate information. In a couple of days to a week, they'll be asking to come out and look around.

## Secure your new pet

Don't underestimate a scared cat. Keep doors and windows closed for the first few days. They can dart through amazingly small gaps as fast as greased lightning. They've lodged themselves in chimneys,



*Your new cat can even make himself at home in a spare bathroom until he's ready to explore the rest of your house.*

ventilation ducts and other awkward places. Open screened windows only if the screen can't be pushed out. Until he's bonded with his new home, he might dash at the first crack of daylight or whiff of outdoors. If you adopted a pet who needs outdoor access, be sure to keep him indoors for at least a couple of weeks until he is truly bonded with your home. (Most pets are content to be indoor-only, and indoor pets live longer, safer lives. But a few need to be indoor/outdoor. We talk this over with people prior to adopting.)

## Meeting your other pets

There may be some sibling rivalry. It will be easier if you let them meet each other gradually. Set up the new one in his own room and let them sniff each other under the door at first. Once they seem nonchalant about that, you can let them see each other

with the door ajar. Let them get nonchalant about that and then leave the door open so they can check out each other's living space. Give them treats while they do this to build up a positive association. Make sure they each have their own food bowls and, for a while at least, their own litter pans.



*Different species can learn to get along and can even become good friends if they're introduced to each other slowly and with supervision.*

Don't allow the new pet to displace the first pet from his favourite nests. Some pets may become best friends. Some may only develop a mutual understanding. But in the vast majority of cases, they learn to coexist.

## Health

Change is stressful, and stress taxes the immune system. This means they're vulnerable to bugs they could otherwise shrug off. Your cat might come down with a cat flu in the first few days -- sneezing, watery eyes, a runny nose, lethargy and a depressed appetite. It should pass in a couple of weeks. If he refuses to eat for more than two or three days and his nose runs with infected (green/yellow) mucus, then he should get attention. Give us a call if you have any concerns, and please contact us or your vet if he won't eat anything at all for more than a few days.

## Appetite

Cats are unique in that they cannot withstand long periods of fasting. If they don't eat for more than about three days, they can succumb to Fatty Liver Disease. They become jaundiced, their organs shut down and they die. Plump cats are more vulnerable than thin ones. Fatty Liver Disease is not really common but it's wise to be aware of it. If your cat is not eating, try tempting her with smelly food such as sardines. Heat it to bring out the aroma. Your vet can provide you with canned food formulated for cats who need extra tempting and

nutrition. Call your vet if your cat is refusing to eat. The sooner it's caught, the easier it is to treat.

## Diet

A sudden change of diet can cause tummy upset or diarrhea. Be prepared for a short period of adjustment as she gets used to her new foods and feeding schedule. Keep her litter pan clean and easily available to her. A good-quality diet is worth the investment in the long run. She will be satisfied with less food rather than filling up on 'fillers' and feeling hungry again soon. As she ages, the good diet will pay off with better overall health. Your pet supply store can direct you to the better-quality foods.

## Training

It's in a cat's nature to seek out high places and to sharpen her claws. She'll need to know right away what's acceptable in her

new home. Make sure she has a place where she can sharpen her claws. All kinds of scratching posts are available at pet supply stores. Make it attractive to her. Rub some catnip on it and show it to her while stroking her and offering her a little treat. If she experiments with sharpening her claws anywhere else, place a loose towel, tin foil or double-sided tape over the forbidden item for a while until she develops the habit of sharpening her claws on her own post. The same applies to food counters or any surface you want to keep her away from. Something that blocks her access should prevent her from developing a habit of



*Your cats might become friends. Make sure they have a scratching post too so they don't use your furniture for claw sharpening.*