



Sharing Your Home With a Cat

What You Need to Know

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Compliments of



Find What You Need

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Congratulations on getting a cat! The amount of information you need to know may seem overwhelming but don't worry. You'll get the hang of it. The benefit is a healthy cat to share your life.

Let's get started!

THE BASICS

Supplies

Starting with the right supplies will help turn your home into a cat home. Every cat needs these:

- Food and water bowls
- Cat or kitten food
- Litter, box, and scoop
- Carrier
- Cat beds and toys
- Scratching post
- Grooming brush and nail trimmers
- Flea/heartworm medicine from your veterinarian



There are many cat related things that you can get including cat trees, cat shelves, collars, harnesses, and more. You don't necessarily have to buy everything either. For example, cats love sitting in cardboard boxes. You can also make your own climbing tower.



Aspen enjoying her box. You can add a towel or blanket to make it more comfortable.

You should also have a [pet first aid kit](#). Knowing what to do in emergencies is a great idea so you don't panic if the unfortunate happens.

After reading this book, read other articles we have on [cats](#). **The more you learn, the easier it will be to make all the right decisions for your new best friend.**

Water

Your cat should have water available at all times. Cats can develop preferences for types and location of water bowls. Some cats will only drink from running water. You can leave a sink trickling water or buy a cat water fountain. Find out what your cat likes best.

Cats that eat only canned food, often drink little water. Canned food has a high percentage of water in it so it takes the place of drinking water.

Most cats prefer wide shallow bowls so their whiskers don't hit the sides. Stainless steel or ceramic is best. Some cats will be allergic to plastic bowls.

Feeding

A high quality food is important. Generally, the more expensive the food, the better the quality as they use ingredients that are easily digested by your cat. This means your cat gets more nutrition from it. In lower quality food, more of the food is passed out in the stool, as the food isn't digested as well. Your cat will need to eat more of that food as well so it may not be as inexpensive as once thought.



Clipper prefers his large ceramic bowl.

Avoid artificial preservatives, as there are better ways to preserve food. Learn how to read [pet food labels](#) to find a good food. We can also advise you on what to feed.

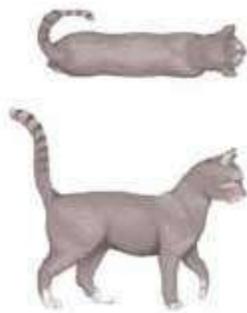
Many people prefer to feed dry food for ease. Most cats, though, will benefit from some canned food in their diet. Older cats or cats with urinary disease definitely need it.

Some medical conditions require prescription diets. Cats that are prone to dental disease will often benefit from a prescription food designed to reduce tartar.

Cats are obligate carnivores. This means they have to have a meat source in their food to survive. **Even if you are a vegetarian, your cat should never be.**

The general rule of thumb for feeding is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup twice daily for a 10-pound cat. This is for a high quality, very digestible food. You will usually need to feed more if using a lower quality food. To figure out how much to feed, start with the recommendations on the package. You will have to fine-tune the amount based on your cat's weight. If he starts to gain weight, decrease the amount of food. If he starts to lose weight, increase the amount of food. Do not rely on your cat to meow when hungry. They quickly learn that meowing makes humans do what they want so some will readily cry for food, even if they don't need it.

Some cats need to be fed meals while others can be free fed (meaning a bowl of food can be left out at all times). If your cat inhales his food, he's not a good candidate for free feeding. Cats that finish their daily ration of food by early afternoon are also cats that need to be fed meals. Unless you are lucky, it's difficult to free feed multiple cats. There's usually at least one that takes more than his fair share!



To determine what's best for your cat, monitor how he looks. A cat that is at a healthy weight should have a waist when you look down on him. They should have a trim underbelly. Often cats will have pouches of skin between their back legs if they have lost weight. If they are overweight, this pouch will be full of fat.

Place food and water bowls away from litter boxes, high traffic areas, and noisy areas (e.g. next to a washing machine). Your cat will be more comfortable if he can eat and drink without being disturbed. Don't allow children or dogs to bother the cat while he is eating. Often, a shelf or top of the fridge makes a good feeding station area.

Litter Boxes

Litter boxes are very important for cats. Location, litter type, box type, smell, and number of boxes can make huge differences for cats. It can also mean the difference between using the box versus using your floor.

Number: There should be one litter box per cat plus one extra. Add another one if needed to make sure there is a litter box on each floor and in the basement.

Location: It should be easily accessible in a quiet, low traffic area. Some cats prefer a box in a more socially important location such as the living room.

A box in a dingy, dark basement may not be your cat's location choice and therefore, your cat may not use it. The box should be located where the cat doesn't feel trapped in it if there are other pets in the house or children that chase the cat.

Litter type: Most cats prefer a scoopable litter (because of the fine granules). There are clay litters, corncob litter, plastic litter, paper litter, and more. Each cat has its own preference. Try several types of litter to find what your cat prefers. Avoid ones that have products added to reduce odor. Use enough litter in each box so your cat can dig. You usually need at least a couple inches.



Scoop daily. Cats will often wait and use the box right after you clean it.

Box type: Again, each cat has its own preference. In general, larger boxes are best for most cats. Older cats need boxes with a lower lip since it may hurt for them to go into the box. Cats that pee vertically (on the wall) will do better with a covered box or one with high walls. Many cats do not like covered boxes so generally it's best to avoid them. Try a variety of boxes to see what your cat prefers.

Collars

If you have a cat that goes outdoors, he should wear a collar at all times. Many indoor cats have collars as well. Make sure the collar is "break-away" so that it can easily come apart if snagged on something.

The best thing is to keep your cat indoors all the time. Indoor only cats are much less likely to get infections, and they avoid bite wounds and trauma from cars.

Coat Care

Most cats do not need baths. Hairless cats are the exception and require routine weekly bathing. Shorthaired cats usually are low maintenance and don't require much brushing, but the more you do, the less hair you will have in your house!

Medium and longhaired cats need routine brushing to prevent mats. Some people prefer to shave certain areas (such as under the belly and around the rear end) while others prefer a full body shave such as a lion cut instead of brushing. Contact a groomer or us regarding shaving.



Aspen loves being brushed.

An older cat or overweight cat may not maintain their coat as well. Use a flea comb daily to prevent matted fur.

A flea comb has the teeth very close together. If the hair is too thick for the comb, use a brush. A good brush to get the undercoat out is the FURminator®.

NEVER try to cut a mat out using scissors! Cat's skin is very thin, and it is much too easy to cut the skin along with the mat.

Nail Care

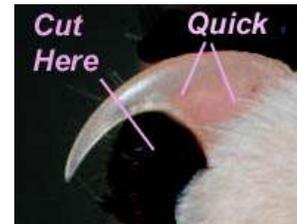
We do not advise declawing cats, especially adult cats. To keep your cat from clawing your furniture, provide a variety of scratching posts (twine, cardboard, carpet, vertical, horizontal, etc.).

Trim nails often to keep them dull to avoid damage. With your cat in your lap, press the toes on the front feet to extend the claws. Use nail trimmers to trim the sharp, white point off the nail.



Claw caps come in a variety of colors.

Avoid the pink area. If you cannot trim the nails, we can trim them for you.



Another alternative to avoid damaging scratching is claw caps. Simply trim the nails, apply a drop of glue into the cap, and place the cap on the nail. You need to reapply them every 1-2 months as the claw grows. We can apply them to your cat's nails if you are having trouble.

Carriers

A carrier is a necessary item when traveling with cats. It's the only way to keep them confined in the car and safe. It also prevents them from scratching you when you take them into a place that is scary to them. Every place is scary if it's not their home!



We recommend carriers designed so that you can remove the top of the carrier. This makes it much easier for your cat if he's scared at a vet visit. We can usually examine him in the carrier if the top is off.

There are ways to get your [cat used to the carrier](#) and used to car rides. The time spent training your cat will be well worth it to make him comfortable during trips. It will go a long way to reduce his stress load.

Environmental Enrichment

You can make your home cat friendly by some simple changes in the environment. We call this [enrichment](#) because it **improves the environment to reduce stress in cats**. This is actually a very important thing to do.

Stress underlies many behavior problems cats have, and it causes physical problems as well. Stressed cats often hide it well, so it's important we become proactive and improve the environment before they have problems.



Most cats love a window seat.

Cats love warm areas, high locations, and hiding spots. Place beds and boxes throughout the house. Add shelves for cat perches around the rooms of importance (living room, bedroom, etc.). A shelf or box next to a window allows them to bird watch. Let your imagination run wild and you can create some amazing areas!



These shelves and post are all made from scratch.

Make scratching posts and toys readily available. Cats like different surfaces for scratching so you may need to try different kinds of posts. Make sure the post is tall enough so the cat can stretch out along it.

Some cats like to scratch on the floor so a scratching pad might be preferred. If you make a climbing tower for your cat, wrap sisal rope on the base for a scratching post.

Cats like [toys](#) that are light enough they can bat them in the air and chase them on the floor. Some like ones they can grab and kick at with their back feet. Most love interactive toys such as wands you wave through the air for them.



Toys are great for getting rid of that extra kitten energy.

Try various ones and find which ones your cat likes best. Store some of the toys in a closet and rotate them so that your cat gets “new” ones often. Cats



like to hide in and run through tunnels, especially if you have more than one cat. You can buy cubes with multiple openings that you can connect together and create a number of different combinations. You can also combine cardboard boxes for the same effect.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE

Vet Visits

We need to see your cat at least once a year. Older cats (8+ years old) should come in at least twice a year. Even though your cat may seem healthy, that's not always the case.

Cats are amazing at hiding sickness. It's in their nature to do so. Often, you won't see a problem until it is highly progressed. Doctors are trained to look for early signs of problems.

Frequent vet visits keep your cat healthy and allow us to find diseases early. The earlier we identify diseases, the easier (and usually cheaper) they are to treat. **This is the best investment you can make.** Your cat will usually live longer and have a better quality of life.



Aubrey and Dr. Colgan with Oliver during a routine exam.

Vaccines

[Vaccines](#) are important for keeping your cat healthy. We try to minimize vaccinations, but some are still necessary to protect against deadly diseases. All cats need a distemper vaccination that also protects against some respiratory viruses. Outdoor cats need a vaccination for Feline Leukemia, a virus that causes a fatal disease.



Cats are hunters and can easily catch bats in the house.

All cats need rabies vaccinations even if they stay indoors all the time. Bats are the primary carrier of rabies in our area and bats will get into our homes more readily than you imagine!

If your cat is exposed to a bat and not vaccinated, you will be advised to have the cat euthanized. It's an agonizing ordeal. Even if you don't want to vaccinate your cat for rabies, we advise you do it just because of the legal hassles if you don't. It will also protect your cat "just in case" a bat does get into your house.

Fleas

We will never eradicate [fleas](#)! They are incredibly good at survival.

Even though you think your indoor cat is safe, you can carry fleas inside with you. Many indoor-only cats develop a flea problem. It tends to be worse because you don't think fleas could be in your house, and it takes you longer to notice the problem.



To avoid fleas, use a trusted flea medicine year round. Flea products carried by veterinarians are generally newer and more effective. We advise you avoid products by Hartz®. Cats treated with their products seem to have more problems than with other companies. **NEVER use a dog product on a cat.** Always make sure any product you use says it is safe for cats.

When you have fleas, you need to treat all pets in the household for at least 3 months. One treatment will not fix the problem because of the immature stages of the flea that are in your house.

Heartworms

These worms are transmitted by mosquitoes, travel through the lungs, and settle in the heart. Most people know about [heartworms](#) in dogs. However, cats can also get these potentially fatal parasites.

Usually in cats, the worms do not get into the heart but stay and cause severe damage in the lungs. Signs include coughing, wheezing, and difficulty breathing. It is often confused with asthma.



Mosquitoes are tiny and can easily slip in the house.

Prevention is critical because no treatment is available for cats. Keep all cats on heartworm prevention year round.

We all see mosquitoes indoors even during winter's warm spells. That means a mosquito can bite your indoor cats. In studies, 25% of the cats with heartworms were indoor cats. Keep all cats on heartworm prevention year round.

Intestinal Parasites

Most cats get [intestinal parasites](#) from eating eggs in the environment or eating prey (rabbits and rodents), though kittens may get some from their mother. They are not as likely to transmit it from cat to cat in the litter box, especially if scooped daily.

At least once a year have a stool sample checked by your veterinarian. **Parasites will have an effect on your cat's health.** Having a stool sample checked is cheap insurance to keep your cat healthy.

Common intestinal parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, and coccidia.

Tapeworms look like small pieces of rice near the rear end or in the stool. They are a result of fleas or eating small prey such as mice. Treatment is simple with a single dose of tapeworm medicine. All cats with fleas should be treated for tapeworms since examining a stool sample doesn't usually show it.



Tapeworm on a cat's tail.

Some kittens will get roundworms shortly after birth.

Adult cats get this parasite from eating prey. Roundworms are large worms and can cause an obstruction in the intestines. They can also cause vomiting and an unthriftiness.

Roundworms can cause serious disease in humans so treatment is imperative.

We treat all kittens for this reason.

Hookworms are also common. Cats become infected by either the larvae (immature forms) penetrating the skin, by eating the eggs in the environment, or by eating a rodent or cockroach that carries it. Hookworms can be serious in high numbers because they suck on blood. **Hookworms can also infect humans.** When humans are affected, it is usually a skin rash. The medicine used to treat roundworms also treats hookworms.

Coccidia are not worms, but protozoa, something like amoebas. They can cause diarrhea but do not infect humans. Cats are exposed through eggs in the environment or by eating another animal, like a mouse, that has it.

After treating your cat for parasites, have a stool sample examined to make sure they are gone. Then have one checked at least once a year.

Dental Care

Cats need daily [dental care](#), just like people. **Keeping your cat's mouth free from disease is one of the most important things you can do to help your cat live longer, and have a happier life.** Dental disease is often painful. Unfortunately, it is often difficult for you to notice your cat is in pain. That's why regular checkups and teeth cleanings are so important.



You can brush your cat's teeth every day or use other dental products to keep the teeth clean. Dental products include Hill's® Prescription Diet® t/d® Feline food (it's proven to help decrease tarter), Maxiguard® Oral Cleansing Gel (applied to the gum line), and approved dental chews. VOHC is the Veterinary Oral Health Committee. Look for their seal of approval for dental products that work.

For products to be effective, you need to use them every day and as often or as much as the package indicates. Even when you do this, or brush your cat's teeth every day, your cat will still need a professional cleaning. However, all the care you do at home will help to keep the teeth healthier longer so you need the professional cleanings less.

A common cat problem is resorptive lesions. This is where the body starts to dissolve the tooth at the root. The problem is that the remaining portion of the tooth above the gum line is very painful. An exam of them mouth is the first step to finding these problem teeth. X-rays are used to confirm them and to see the extent of the problem. To alleviate the pain, the tooth needs to be extracted or the top removed during a professional dental cleaning.



This x-ray shows that the last tooth is starting to dissolve. The remaining tip of tooth is painful.



Cleaning teeth while under anesthesia

With a professional cleaning, anesthesia is needed so that the entire mouth can be examined, teeth x-rayed, and teeth extracted if needed. This may seem excessive, especially if your cat needs it often, yet **it is vitally important.** Regular cleaning stops dental problems from progressing. It's easier (and cheaper) to treat problems early, rather than waiting years when the only solution is to extract many teeth.

Microchip

A microchip is a small locating chip, about twice the size of a grain of rice, placed under the skin to help identify lost pets. Cats tolerate the placement well and every cat should



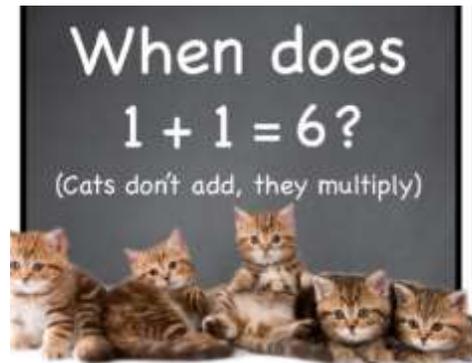
Microchips are injected with a needle under the skin between the shoulders.

have a microchip. Too many cats escape out the door and some won't keep a collar on. Good intentioned people pick up your cat thinking it's a stray. **A microchip may be the only way someone can know the cat belongs to you.**

After your cat receives a microchip, contact the company to let them know your contact information. They can then contact you directly. Otherwise, if your cat is found, the company will give out our clinic information, as that is who purchased the microchip. Most shelters microchip cats before you adopt them. Again, contact the company to give them your contact information.

Spay/Neuter

Female cats should be [spayed](#), and male cats should be [neutered](#). This prevents them from producing unwanted kittens. **It also prevents some behavioral and health problems.** Cats that have not had the surgery are more likely to wander away, get into fights, and spray urine to mark their territory. They can also develop some cancers or infections that are unlikely to occur in unspayed and unneutered cats. We advise having the surgery done when your kitten is four to six months old, though we can do the surgery at any time.



Indoors vs Outdoors

We advise that all cats stay indoors at all times.

Outdoor cats are at a higher risk for developing health problems. They can be infected with [Feline Leukemia and FIV](#), two viruses that affect the immune system and are deadly. They get the viruses from other cats. Outdoor cats are also more likely to get into fights with other cats and get bite wounds that can be severe. Trauma, such as being hit by a car, is also possible.



Sick cat with an IV

When the weather is severe, they are more at risk. Other animals, such as coyotes, can kill outdoor cats. This is common even in residential areas.

We recommend testing all outdoor cats for Feline Leukemia and FIV at least once a year. Early detection of the disease allows us to do things to support the cat's immune system to slow down the progression. All outdoor cats should be vaccinated for Feline Leukemia.

Supplements

We want your cat to live a long and healthy life. To help achieve that goal, we encourage preventive measures. Besides, regular checkups and lab tests, a good quality food and supplements are important. The supplements we advise all promote a healthy immune system. This is important to ward off infections and to slow down diseases, including cancer. Some of the supplements will also support different organs so that they function well.

Most cats will benefit from antioxidants, fish oil, and probiotics to maintain good health. Other supplements or herbs will help specific conditions. The more we can support the heart, kidneys, and liver, the less work these organs need to do and the healthier your cat will be.

BEHAVIOR

Cats are NOT Small Dogs

Cats **behave** very differently than dogs. Most cats will not do what you want them to do. They don't follow commands well, though you CAN train cats. Often they do whatever they want.



Dogs are amazing at reading human body language. Cats are not (or they just don't care).

Cats are born hunters. They focus their play on hunting and killing. This is why they love furry toys they can chase and destroy. Outdoor cats will bring their owner's special gifts of dead animals that they have caught. Beware! These gifts are not always dead.

Petting



Cats will let you know how, when, where, and for how long they want to be petted. Pay attention to how they respond so you learn when it's time to stop. Some cats tolerate only one or two pats. Some cats will bite if you pet them too long, too hard, in the wrong place, or if they aren't in the mood. Wrong places may include anything beyond the head, around the tail, or under the belly.

Petting will overstimulate some cats, and they will grab your hand to "play" which often means biting or kicking you with their back feet. Some cats don't want you petting them at all while others don't want you to stop.

Listen to what your cat is telling you.



Changes in Behavior

Any time you notice a change in your cat's normal behavior, you should contact us. Cats are amazing at hiding their illnesses and may only have a slight change in how they act to let you know something is wrong. **Don't wait to go to the vet; they often get very sick very quickly.**

Seniors

We consider cats to be seniors at 8 years of age. This is equivalent to a human being 60 years old. As they get older, **senior cats tend to have special needs.**

Older cats often become picky about their food. You may need to try a variety of foods on a rotating schedule. Try a combination of dry and wet foods. They may eat better if you warm the food up slightly, especially wet food. They may like it better with gravy or something on it. They may eat more if you offer multiple small meals throughout the day.



You need to experiment to find out what works best for your cat. Even then, **it may change in a few days so be patient.**

Older cats may get crankier as they age because they are painful. They will develop arthritis and may let you know by hissing more often or being sensitive about petting. If you notice anything like this, have your cat examined. There are things we can do to help your cat be more comfortable. Other things that will help include ramps or step stools to get up on furniture or on your bed, a litter box with a lower edge to enter, and thick, soft, heated beds.

Senior cats benefit from having check-ups every 6 months. Many things can change in such a short time, and **we love to find things early when we have a better chance of making it better.**



Painful older cat with arthritis.

COMMON HEALTH ISSUES

Urinating Outside the Box

A cat that is [urinating outside the box](#) is not doing it for spite. **He is trying to tell you something!** It may be a health issue such as a [urinary tract infection](#) or [thyroid disease](#). Often it is an environmental issue such as litter box preferences, being bullied by another cat around the box, or a cat outside threatening his territory.



We need to rule out any health issue first before we can address behavioral issues.

A urine sample tells a lot about what is going on. Usually it's easiest to bring your cat to us to obtain a sample, but you can try to collect it at home. At home, clean one litter box well and use a non-absorbent plastic litter (you can get that from us). Keep your cat in a small room such as a bathroom with the special litter box until your cat urinates. Pour the urine into a sealed container and refrigerate it. Bring it to us within a few hours of collection. Unfortunately, some cats won't use the box when they are confined. It is especially difficult if you have more than one cat.

If there are signs of a urinary tract infection or another disease, we will treat your cat for that. If he is still not using the box after the physical problem is treated, then we will address a behavioral problem. Occasionally both situations are going on.

If tests are normal, then **the challenge is figuring out why your cat won't use the box**. There are many reasons, and it can take some effort to find what helps your cat use the box again. You will need patience and persistence as you do one thing at a time to try to solve the problem.

Ear Problems

[Ear infections](#) are the most common cause of an itchy ear. Cats can get bacteria, yeast, or both in their ears. The ears are itchy, have a lot of waxy build up, and can smell. Your cat may shake his head, hold his ears at an odd angle, or dig at his ears with his feet. We can determine the cause by examining a swab of debris from the ears under the microscope. **Once we know the cause, we can start the correct treatment.**



If left untreated, an ear infection can cause a hematoma. This is when the earflap fills with blood because the cat shakes his head hard. The ear swells and is uncomfortable. A minor surgery may be needed to repair this, and the ear infection needs to be treated.



Ear mites cause intense itching and a very dark, dirty ear. They can also develop a hematoma because the cat scratches so hard. Mites are more likely in outdoor cats or cats found as strays. They aren't as common as people think.

Allergies can also cause itchy ears. If there is no infection or mites, medicine to help the itchiness can make your cat more comfortable. Tests for allergies to find what is causing the problem are the next step.

If your cat is scratching his ears, have him examined to find out what the reason is. Most of the time, medicines you buy in a pet store won't help.

Thyroid Disease

Thyroid disease is common in older cats. They develop a growth on their thyroid gland that causes an increase in thyroid hormone. This is hyperthyroidism. Dogs tend to have the opposite problem - too low of thyroid hormone (hypothyroidism). The increased thyroid hormone revs up their metabolism. It can have a devastating effect on other parts of the body over time.

The most common signs include weight loss despite eating a lot, increased urination (frequency and amount), and inappropriate urination. Signs can also include vomiting, diarrhea, and hyperactivity. The cat's coat is often matted, greasy, and looks unkempt. Some cats will have high blood pressure and heart disease.



Because the cats are eating well and active, people often don't realize there is a problem in the early stages.

We can readily diagnose the disease with a blood test. We recommend testing all cats at least once a year when they reach their senior years. Early detection prevents serious complications from the disease.

This disease is a life-long disease but easily managed with a variety of treatment options.

Kidney Disease

The majority of cats will have [kidney disease](#) if they live long enough. As cats age, their kidneys wear out and they simply don't work as well. The severity of the disease depends on how much of the kidneys are still working.



Common signs include weight loss, decreased appetite, dehydration, increased urination, inappropriate urination, lethargy, and vomiting. Tests of the urine and blood will diagnose the disease. All senior cats should have tests at least once a year.

Early diagnosis is important because early treatment will drastically increase your cat's quality of life and life span. Cats can live with failing kidneys for years with proper treatment. Treatment consists of a prescription diet, supplements, and medications.

Diabetes Mellitus

[Diabetes](#) in cats is similar to diabetes in humans. **It's more common in overweight, older cats.** The body does not produce enough insulin, and glucose (blood sugar) increases to dangerous levels. Common signs include sudden weight loss, vomiting, increased urination, inappropriate urination, increased thirst, and abnormal walking.

Blood and urine tests will diagnose the disease. As with many other serious conditions, early detection will prevent complications from the disease as well as improve your chances of successful treatment.

In early stages, a prescription diet may control it alone. Eventually most cats will need insulin injections. You can give these injections at home. Oral medicine that people take does not work in cats.

Initially multiple blood tests are needed to find the best dose of insulin for your cat. Once the correct dose is established, we run blood tests periodically to monitor the blood sugar level.



Insulin syringes are small, and most cats don't even notice the injections.

Cats also need to have urine tests done regularly along with cultures. **Cats with diabetes are prone to urinary tract infections.**

POISONS & OTHER DANGERS

Poisonous Human Food

Ideally, you should not feed human food to your cat. However, we know that it doesn't always work that way. You may have a cat that will steal food from anywhere.



Cats are curious creatures but are worse when they are hungry.

Here's a list of some [foods that can be poisonous](#) to your cat: Onions, Garlic, Chives, Star Fruit, Alcohol, Chocolate, Yeast Dough, Salt (excessive amounts such as homemade play dough or ornaments).

Sugar free products sweetened with xylitol may be poisonous to cats and are very poisonous to dogs. They include many sugarless gums, human toothpaste, and human vitamins. You can also buy it in bulk to sweeten items. Check labels. If there is xylitol, keep it out of your

cat's reach.

For a more complete list, visit the [ASPCA website](#) or the [Pet Poison Helpline](#).

Non-food Poisons

Most human and dog pain [medicines](#) are poisonous to cats. This includes but is not limited to ibuprofen, Aleve®, Tylenol®, and Advil®. Make sure you don't drop a pill and leave it for your cat to find later. Even one pill can be dangerous. Other human medicines such as cold medicines, antidepressants, anti-cancer drugs, diet pills, and vitamins are also poisonous. **Assume any medicine not prescribed for you cat is going to cause problems!**

All flowers of the lily family are extremely poisonous to cats. This includes but is not limited to Calla lilies, Tiger lilies, and Easter lilies. Other [poisonous plants](#) include tulips, sago palm, rhododendron, oleander, and peace lily (not a true lily but still poisonous to cats). The majority of houseplants are poisonous, so check every plant you want in your house. Keep all of them out of reach from your cats.



Homemade play dough is a danger for cats because of the high salt content. When the kids are done playing, pick up all the little pieces and throw them away! At Christmas time, beware the homemade ornaments are often made with a high salt content as well. Some cats will steal them off the tree!

If you have a rodent problem, do not use rat or mouse poison. Your cat may eat a tainted rodent or may eat the bait itself. **Remember, anything that will poison a mouse will poison your cat.**

For a more complete list of poisonous items, visit the [ASPCA website](#) or the [Pet Poison Helpline](#). Both have phone numbers that you can call (for a fee) as well.

Other Dangers

Power cords seem to be a cat's favorite chew toy. They are also one of the most deadly. Remove power cords, cover them, or spray with a product that tastes bad (Bitter Apple Spray) to avoid this danger.



String is extremely dangerous for cats. They swallow the string that then binds up the intestines. This is an emergency requiring surgery to repair. Don't let your cat play with string, ribbons, or toys that have loose strings. Tinsel during Christmas is a huge no-no for cat owners. It acts just like string.

Some cats like to eat rubber bands or hair ties. Some like paper items. Learn what your cat likes and keep everything similar to it hidden away. **You need to cat-proof your house to keep him safe.**

Cats may jump up on a stovetop when it's still hot. Some will knock over items spilling hot liquid or creating broken glass. It's also a great way to eat all kinds of things they shouldn't! Make sure to keep your cat out of the kitchen or use a motion-detected air canister to train him not to jump up on the counter or stove.



Nothing can be left out on the table or countertop or your cat WILL find it!

CONCLUSION

We hope you have enjoyed this book and have learned some things. All of us at Loving Paws Pet Clinic want to help you learn everything possible about cats. You can make the best decisions if you have the right knowledge.

Loving Paws Pet Clinic

Loving pets is what we do!



Dr. Arrin Colgan and Clipper

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