



## FACTSHEET

### Essential cat care

Every cat owner needs to provide a few essentials to ensure their cat has a healthy and happy life.

#### **Food and Water**

Always aim to feed your cat the best quality food you can afford. At Cat Protection we feed and recommend Hill's Science Diet, as it provides all the nutrients your cat will need. Adult cats will need to be fed twice a day and kittens three to four small meals a day. Follow the feeding guide on the food packaging to help you give your cat the right amount. Avoid overfeeding your cat as this can cause obesity.

Provide your cat with fresh water. Two bowls are better than one. Never give your cat or kitten milk as cats are lactose intolerant and can become very ill from drinking milk. Pet milk is available from pet stores and supermarkets if you feel you must provide milk for your cat.

#### **Disease Prevention**

**Fleas** - You will need to provide monthly flea treatment to your cat to prevent fleas hatching on your pet. Fleas cannot live on humans but can cause allergic reactions on some pets and humans. To avoid this remember to treat your cat regularly. Spot on treatments such as Advantage are easy to apply and are not stressful to apply to your cat.

**Worms** - Your cat will need worming for their entire life. Intestinal worms like hookworm, roundworm and tapeworm can be killed using a worming tablet or a spot on treatment. Depending on the product you choose you may need to do this monthly or three monthly. Humans can catch worms from pets and the environment and your pet can catch them from us, so consider worming your human family as well. Products like Advocate, a spot on treatment, will treat worms and fleas with one application. Always follow the directions on the packaging. At Cat Protection, we use and recommend Advocate.

**Vaccinations** - Kittens need to be vaccinated at 8 weeks old and again at 12 weeks old. After this your cat will need a yearly vaccination. It is important to keep the vaccinations up to date to prevent your cat getting cat flu or feline enteritis.

**Skin Cancer** - Many people do not realise cats can get skin cancer. Cats with white noses, ears or light coloured pigmentation on the ears and nose are especially at risk. To prevent your cat getting cancer you should keep them inside for the hottest part of the day. If this is not possible apply a pet sunscreen to the ears and nose when he is outdoors (never use human sunscreen as these are toxic to cats). Any sunburn on the cat should be seen by a vet as soon as possible. Kittens as young as 12 months have been reported with skin cancer lesions.

Ringworm - Ringworm is a fungus NOT a worm. It appears on the skin as a circular mark that is inflamed and itchy for your cat. It is carried on hair follicles. Humans can catch ringworm and can give it to cats. It is treatable so any suspect marks on your cat should be seen by your vet.

### **Grooming**

Although cats groom themselves, it is important that you brush your cat regularly to avoid cat hairs in your house. Grooming also helps you form a bond with your cat. Short haired cats should be groomed one a week and long haired cats daily. Concentrate on areas your cat may have trouble reaching, like behind the legs and back of the neck.

### **Identification**

A microchip contains a number that can be scanned by your vet. This number is on a data base with your details. This database can only be accessed by an authorised person for the purpose of reuniting the cat with their owner. A few weeks after adopting your new cat you will receive a letter from your council letting you know they have received your details and to let you know how to register your cat. It is very important that you remember to always keep your details up to date and change them with the council if you move. If your cat is ever lost this is sometimes the ONLY way of getting them back. You should also consider a collar and a name tag on your cat if your cat goes outside.

### **Keeping your cat happy indoors**

Cats can live happily indoors. By keeping your cat indoors you are benefiting your cat, yourself and the environment. At the Cat Protection Society we encourage all cat owners to keep their cat indoors.

When you decide you would like your cat to be an indoor cat you need to remember to provide enough stimulation for your cat so they don't get bored. Although cats sleep a lot, you will need to provide at least 30 minutes a day of play time for your cat, even older cats. The following points will ensure your cat has stimulation throughout the day:

- Toys - there is a huge variety of cat toys available to keep your cat happy for hours, even some you can enjoy as well
- Greenery - provide your cat with some cat grass or catmint in a pot, your cat can chew on the foliage to help their digestion
- An outside run - make a cat enclosure in your yard so your cat can sit outside without the hazards of being on the street. Look on the internet for patterns for these or companies that pre-make them. There are free instructions on the Cat Protection website on how to build cat runs and cat proof fencing
- Scratching posts - cats need to scratch things in order to shed the dead nail sheath from their claws. Provide your cat with a scratch post, or a few, to protect your furniture. There is a huge variety available, even with cat activity centres attached. To promote use of the post you can spray them with catnip spray
- Clean the litter tray - cats are very clean animals so ensure you remove any solid waste from your cat's litter tray daily and provide your cat with a couple of trays to avoid any nasty surprises when you get home
- Get TWO CATS!!! Keep your cat entertained by getting them a friend. This will ensure your cat is never lonely and always has a playmate
- If you decide to let your cat outside always curfew your cat at night, for your cat's safety and the environment.