

FACTSHEET

The cost of owning a cat

Many people think owning a cat won't involve any more expense than feeding the cat. This is a mistake – responsible cat ownership means much more than providing food. Cats have essential health and welfare needs that must be met throughout their lifetime, which may be anything from 14-20 years. As well as commitment of time, there is a financial commitment that needs to be made to ensure responsible cat ownership.

If you can't make a lifetime commitment to a cat, you might want to consider foster caring, which only requires short-term commitments and still lets you enjoy the companionship of cats – and you'll be helping feline welfare. For more information about fostering, please go to <https://catprotection.org.au/foster-caring/>

Every year thousands of cats and kittens are surrendered to welfare organisations or council pounds because their owners cannot afford to care for them. Sadly, many cats are then euthanased. Please don't contribute to this tragic situation.

Below is a list of essential expenses you can expect when taking on the responsibility of a cat. They include:

- one-off expenses (pay once)
- on-going expenses (pay regularly)
- periodic expenses (pay occasionally)

Please note: if you are adopting a cat or kitten from Cat Protection these items are covered by our fee:

- Microchipping and lifetime registration
- Desexing
- Vaccination (a minimum of at least one vaccination)
- Veterinary health-check
- Up-to-date with flea and worm treatment

Plus we will give you a complimentary bag (or tins) of Hill's Science Diet.

One-off expenses	Approximate cost
<p>Cat or kitten There are many places where you can adopt or purchase a cat or kitten. Importantly, choose a cat or kitten that suits your lifestyle and home environment as this will determine how happy you and the cat will be. Choosing a pet that is inappropriate for you and your lifestyle can have heartbreaking consequences. Choose wisely and only from a reputable organisation or breeder.</p>	<p>The cost of a cat or kitten can vary greatly:</p> <p>Domestic cats: \$50-\$350 Pedigree cats: \$400-\$2000</p>
<p>Desexing For maximum health and social benefits both male and female cats need desexing before they are sexually mature. This can be as early as 10 weeks of age.</p> <p>For more information about the importance of desexing please read our desexing factsheet or see the video on our YouTube channel.</p>	<p>The cost for desexing varies greatly between vet clinics and whether your cat is female or male.</p> <p>Female: \$100-\$350 Male: \$80-\$200</p> <p>If you need assistance with discount cat desexing please call us on 9519 7201.</p>
<p>Microchipping It is a legal requirement for all cats to be microchipped and placed on the NSW Pet Registry by the time they are 12 weeks old.</p>	<p>\$25-\$45</p>
<p>Registration It is a legal requirement for all cats in NSW to be registered. Registration is for life. Please visit www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au.</p>	<p>Desexed: \$57 Undesexed: \$207 Pensioner: \$24 Adopted from eligible pound or shelter: \$28.50</p> <p>Fees current as at July 2018 and subject to annual CPI increase.</p>

On-going expenses	Approximate cost
<p>Vaccinations All cats and kittens, including indoor-only cats, need vaccinations to protect them from life-threatening diseases. The number of initial vaccinations required depends on whether it is for a kitten or an adult cat and where they live. To find out what vaccination schedule is best for your cat speak to your local vet. Most boarding facilities require cats to be up-to-date with their vaccinations.</p>	\$60-\$80 per vaccination
<p>Veterinary health checks All cats should be health-checked annually and at least twice yearly for senior cats (older than 7-8 years). Health-checks can help to identify any problems before they become worse and subsequently more expensive to treat.</p>	From \$60
<p>Flea treatments It is vital cats are routinely flea treated. This includes indoor-only cats. You can begin flea treating a kitten from 6 weeks old then monthly for their entire life. Flea treatments mostly come in liquid topical form that is applied on the back of the neck between the shoulder blades, but there are tablet forms as well.</p> <p>Caution: never use dog treatments on cats – many are highly toxic to cats and can be fatal.</p>	\$8-\$15 per month
<p>Worm treatments It is vital cats are routinely worm treated. This includes indoor-only cats. Kittens should be worm treated every 2 weeks from 4 weeks of age to 12 weeks of age then 3 months for their entire life. Always ensure the worming treatment is an all wormer to ensure it is treating all types of worms your cat may contract. Worm treatments come in different forms: paste, tablet or liquid topical treatments (“spot-on”).</p>	\$6-\$20 per dose

<p>Food Cat Protection recommends you feed your cat the best quality cat food you can afford. If possible, avoid supermarket brands and buy premium food that is nutritionally 'complete and balanced'. Cat Protection recommends Hill's Science Diet food. Good quality food actually requires less food to be fed each meal and will last you longer than poorer quality food.</p>	<p>Wet food: \$1.50-\$2.75 per tin Dry food: (2kg) \$35-\$45</p>
<p>Clipping Some long-haired cats have fur that mats into dreadlocks (despite regular brushing). Matted fur causes pain and skin infections when left untreated. Clipping normally requires the cat to be anaesthetised.</p>	<p>Frequency of clipping will depend on the cat's individual needs; discuss with your vet or vet nurse. \$150-\$350</p>
<p>Litter You will need to supply your cat with clean litter on a regular basis. Some litter products need changing daily (recycled paper litter) and others need changing 2-4 weekly (crystal litter). Always follow guidelines on the pack and never allow the litter to become urine soaked and full of faeces. This can cause inappropriate toileting (toileting outside of the tray) and is unhygienic.</p>	<p>\$8-\$25 per bag</p>
<p>Periodic expenses</p>	<p>Approximate cost</p>
<p>Litter tray For indoor only-cats you need one litter tray for every cat plus one extra. Inappropriate toileting can occur when there are insufficient trays for the number of cats living in the home. Cats who mainly live and toilet outdoors will need a litter tray inside for night-time use (cats should always be curfewed between dusk and dawn) and for times they might feel uncomfortable going outside. Litter trays come in different sizes and styles. It is important that the tray is large enough for your cat to turn around in it.</p>	<p>Litter trays last a long time, so you might only need to replace trays a couple of times during your cat's lifetime. \$10-\$150</p>

<p>Carry cage A secure pet carrier is essential whenever you need to transport your cat. It is illegal to transport your cat in a car without a carry cage. Carry cages need to be sturdy and suitable for the weight of your cat (cages for kittens are not suitable or strong enough for adult cats). Most vet clinics insist on cats visiting the clinic to be in a secure pet carrier.</p>	<p>Good quality pet carriers can last a lifetime. \$50-\$150</p>
<p>Scratching post or mat All cats need to scratch as part of their normal behaviour. Shedding dead nails is important for claw health. Even if your cat goes outside they will need a scratch post or mat inside so they don't scratch your furniture.</p>	<p>The cost of scratching posts/mats varies greatly. Some last for a long time but all will need replacing during a cats lifetime. Kitten: \$25 minimum Adult: \$60 minimum</p>
<p>Bedding Cat's need a place of their own to sleep, even if they like to snuggle up with you in bed.</p>	<p>The cost of blankets or cat beds varies greatly. Blankets: \$10 minimum Beds: \$30 minimum</p>
<p>Toys Cats of all ages love toys. It is important cats can exhibit their predator-prey instincts with toys and not the local wildlife.</p>	<p>The cost of toys varies greatly. From no cost (homemade toys) and upwards from \$2 for commercial toys.</p>
<p>Collar and ID tag A collar and ID tag can help lost, wandering or injured cats be quickly identified and their owner contacted. Owners of indoor-only cats should consider a collar and tag for their cat in case of an emergency (if the cat escapes). If your cat goes outside you should attach a bell to your cat's collar as this can help alert wildlife.</p>	<p>Collars need replacing when they've become worn. Collar: \$10-\$40 ID Tag: \$15-\$25</p>
<p>Brush All cats benefit from being brushed. This complements their own grooming and helps reduce fur-balls. Grooming can also help you develop a bond with your cat. Short-hair cats should be brushed at least once a week and long-hair cats daily.</p>	<p>Brushes last a long time but do need replacing when they have become worn. \$10-\$50</p>

<p>Food and water bowls It is important to have bowls that are sturdy and easily cleaned. You can also get automatic feeders and water fountains for fussy cats. Water and food bowls should be placed far apart as cats do not like to drink near their food.</p>	<p>The cost of cat bowls varies greatly depending on style and material. \$5 minimum</p>
<p>Boarding There are many establishments that offer cat boarding, including some vet practices. It is recommended you visit a boarding facility before making a booking. Alternatively, engage a pet sitter or have a friend visit/stay in your home.</p>	<p>\$15-20 minimum per night</p>
<p>Emergency or necessary veterinary care Unexpected illness or injury to your cat can be very expensive and could increase the overall cost of owning a cat greatly. You might wish to consider pet insurance or set aside a savings account for unexpected vet bills. A dollar a day for three years will add up to more than \$1000!</p>	

Excluding one-off expenses and also excluding costs for boarding, clipping or unexpected veterinary care, caring for a cat will cost between \$25 and \$40 a week.