

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 visit <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 included in your adoption:

- 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 (pouches or tins) of Hill's Science Diet food!

One-off expenses	Approximate costs
<p>Cat or kitten There are many places where you can adopt or purchase a cat or kitten. It is important to choose a cat or kitten that suits your lifestyle and home, as this will determine how happy you both 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: Domestic cats: \$50-\$350 Pedigree cats: \$400-\$2000</p>

<p>Desexing For maximum health and social benefits both male and female cats need to be desexed 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 factsheet on <u>Desexing</u> 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-\$500 Male: \$80-\$350</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. For more information please read our factsheet on <u>Microchipping and registration</u>.</p> <p>Registration It is a legal requirement for all cats in NSW to be registered. Registration is for life.</p> <p>Please visit www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p>\$25-\$75</p> <p>Desexed: \$56 If cat is not desexed by 4 months of age, owners must pay an annual permit fee of \$81 each year until the cat is desexed, in addition to the registration fee</p> <p>Pensioner: \$27 Adopted from eligible pound or shelter: \$0 (registration fee waived)</p> <p>Fees current as of July 2021.</p>

Ongoing expenses	Approximate costs
<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>	<p>\$60-\$100 per vaccination</p>
<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>	<p>From \$60</p>

<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> <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 every 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> <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>\$8-\$15 per month</p> <p>\$6-\$20 per dose</p> <p>Wet food: \$1.50-\$3 per tin/pouch</p> <p>Dry food: (2kg) \$35-\$55</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.</p> <p>\$150-\$500</p>
<p>Litter Cats are very clean animals so 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). Faecal matter will need to be removed daily regardless of what litter you use. Always follow guidelines on the pack and never allow the litter to become urine soaked and full of faeces. This is unhygienic and can cause inappropriate toileting (toileting outside of the tray) or toileting issues such as urinary tract infections due to the cat not wanting to use a dirty litter tray.</p>	<p>\$8-\$25 per bag</p>

Periodic expenses	Approximate costs
<p>Litter tray For indoor only cats you need one litter tray for every cat plus one extra. Toileting problems 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 when 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>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 that cats visiting the clinic be in a secure pet carrier.</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.</p> <p>\$10-\$400</p> <p>Good quality pet carriers can last a lifetime.</p> <p>\$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. There are a wide variety of scratch posts and activity centres with scratch posts built in.</p> <p>Bedding Cats need a place of their own to sleep, even if they like to snuggle up with you in bed.</p> <p>Toys Cats of all ages love toys. It is important that cats exhibit their predator-prey instincts with toys and not the local wildlife.</p>	<p>The cost of scratching posts/mats varies greatly. Some last for a long time but all will need replacing during a cat's lifetime.</p> <p>Kitten: \$25 minimum Adult: \$60 minimum</p> <p>The cost of blankets or cat beds varies greatly</p> <p>Blankets: \$10 minimum Beds: \$30 minimum</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.</p>	<p>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.

While all care has been taken in preparing this document, it is intended to provide general information only and should not be taken as constituting professional advice. Mention of a product or business does not mean endorsement by Cat Protection.