

New Kittens, Bringing One Home

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



Bringing home a new kitten is an exciting time, but it also is a time of big transition for you and the kitten. In order to meet his physical, nutritional, and emotional needs, you'll need to plan ahead for his arrival. This will make the transition to his new home much easier for both of you.

First, make an appointment with your veterinarian to have your new pet examined. If possible, schedule the appointment so you can take your cat to the veterinarian immediately after picking him up.

Make sure you have a sturdy travel [kennel](#) for him to ride home in. When cats are nervous, they may feel more secure in an enclosed space such as a crate. Plus, an unrestrained cat can be a driving hazard, especially if he climbs down by the pedals, or jumps onto your shoulder. Having your cat in a carrier can also be helpful in case he vomits, urinates or defecates, which some cats will do if they are nervous.

Make Him Feel At Home

Kittens feel more comfortable in a new home when they have something near them that smells like their old home. It is especially helpful to take a towel or blanket the kitten has been sleeping on with you to his new home. Make arrangements ahead of time with the breeder or shelter, possibly bringing in a towel for the cat to sleep on for several days before you pick him up. Place the towel in the carrier for the ride home, and leave it in the carrier for your new pet to sleep on the first few days. If you place a new bed in the carrier, be sure to place the towel inside the bed.

To limit the number of changes your new pet experiences the first day, find out what [food](#) and [litter](#) the cat has had, and try to get the same brands. If you want to change brands later, slowly (over the course of a week), mix the new brand in with the old brand.

Make a Quiet Place for Him

Before you bring your new cat home, put his [food](#), [water](#), [toys](#), [scratching post](#), and [litter pan](#) in a quiet room you can close off, such as a spare bedroom. If he is shy, fearful, or you have other cats in your home, the use of the product [Comfort Zone® with Feliway® Spray](#) may be helpful. Comfort Zone® with Feliway® is a product that was designed to help reduce anxiety in cats. It mimics the pheromones from the cat's face, used to communicate feelings of well being. You may wish to spray [Comfort Zone® with Feliway®](#) in the cat's new room, in the cat carrier before and after you pick up the cat, and around the house, if you have other cats. Alternatively, you can purchase a [plug-in form](#) of the product to use in the house.

Introducing Him to Your Home and Family Members

Cats need to become thoroughly familiar with new surroundings before they feel comfortable. An entire apartment or house can be overwhelming all at once. Many cats will hide under beds or furniture, sometimes for days. It will be much less stressful for your cat to learn about you, your family, and your home a little at a time. This is even more important if there are multiple people and/or pets in your household.

When you bring your cat home, place him in the room you have fixed up for him, keep this room closed off, and let him explore that area first. Let the cat come out of his crate on his own; do not try to coax him or tip the crate to force him out. Cats are curious and most will soon come out to explore their surroundings. If the cat seems very timid, you can leave the room for a while and check back later. If you really want to stay in the room, get a book and read. When the cat is ready to come out, stay where you are and let him come to you. Talk in a soft, reassuring tone, pet

Kitten Supply List

- [Cat carrier](#)
- [Cat bed](#)
- [Food and water dishes](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Litter box](#) and [scoop](#)
- A [collar](#) and [tag](#) (your kitten should wear them whenever he leaves the house, even if he is inside a cat carrier)
- [Toys](#) and a [scratching post](#)
- [Grooming supplies](#), the type will vary with the breed of cat
- Healthcare supplies including [ear cleaner](#), and [dental supplies](#)
- Book(s) on cat healthcare and behavior

him if he seems interested, but do not try to pick him up. Leave the open carrier in the room so that he has a safe retreat if he wants one. Give him time to learn that he can trust you.

Introduce other family members slowly. Have them come into the room one at a time to pet and play with the cat. Have younger children sit down, then show them how to gently stroke the cat's fur and offer him a few [treats](#). Make certain that children understand that they are not to chase the cat, hurt him or bother him while he eats, sleeps, or uses the litter box. If there are no other pets, you can let the cat begin to explore the rest of the house in a few days.

Knowing your cat's history, taking care to pick a cat likely to fit in well with your household, and taking the time to gradually introduce the newcomer, will greatly increase the chances of your new cat becoming a happy, permanent member of your family.

For more information, including information on vaccines, see our [Kitten Center](#).