

New Kitty Checklist

Congratulations on your new kitty! Here are a few things that you'll need for the transition to having a well-adjusted family member.

Food- A good quality, high moisture meat-based diet is essential for your new cat's health and happiness. An ideal feline diet contains a variety of canned or raw food in addition to (or instead of) dry food alone. Kittens need frequent feeding for the first six months of life to support their growth and development. Introduce an assortment of tastes and textures while young so your cat won't become a finicky eater.

Food Bowls– Cat food bowls should be shallow and wide to accommodate whiskers, and made of ceramic, glass, or stainless steel. No plastic food bowls– they can harbor bacteria or cause chin acne.

Water bowl or fountain – Water is crucial to feline health and cats are often poor drinkers. Make a water station somewhere away from their food (cats instinctually avoid water where they eat) or set up a water fountain where the moving water will encourage drinking. This can head off urinary problems caused by chronic dehydration.

Collar and Tag- A breakaway collar and ID tag will identify your cat if she gets lost.

Litter, Box and Scoop – A high quality litter will help keep your house free of unpleasant odors. We prefer plant-based clumping litters made from wheat, corn or pine for their flushability and superior odor control. The box should be large and deep to keep the litter inside. A large strong slotted scoop will make your chores go faster. *For more information see our handout, "Cats, Litter, and Litterboxes".*

Stain/Odor Remover – Bring this home before an accident happens. **Petastic** is a great enzymatic cleaner that dissolves the source of stains and odor from carpets, floors, bedding, and clothing to insure your kitty won't be drawn back to the same spot.

Grooming Tools – Brushing is a great way to bond with your new kitty. Besides stimulating the skin, it removes loose hair and dander. Use a **pin brush** or a **stainless steel comb** for long-haired cats, and a **slicker brush** or **Zoom Groom** rubber massager for short-haired cats. Use a scissors-style **nail trimmer** to keep nails short. Always have a jar of styptic powder on hand in case you nick a quick. A **flea comb** is an essential tool for finding fleas and removing them.

Scratching equipment– Scratching is an essential feline function. It provides exercise, marks territory and removes the outer sheath of their claws. Channel their scratching behavior to a scratching post or cardboard scratcher in your house. More is better! They can be inexpensive and will save your furniture. Posts can be simple or elaborate and provide climbing opportunities for indoor enrichment.

Beds – Cats will always seek something soft and warm. Give your kitty her own place and protect your stuff from cat hair with a soft washable throw, mat or bed. Older cats especially will like our self-heating thermal mats with space age technology.

Toys – Keep your cat happy, interested and active with a variety of fabulous toys. Anything with fur, feathers or movement will elicit his hunting instinct and contribute to his rich fantasy world. Wand toys let you interact with your cat, alleviating boredom and preventing obesity. Our favorite wands are the **Da Bird** and **Met Pet** feathers on a swivel that moves and sound like an actual bird! Laser toys are very amusing –cats will chase the little red dots until their paws fall off. **Catnip toys** are great too, about 60% of cats respond to catnip, and kittens take time to become sensitive to it. Did you know that most cats love **honeysuckle toys**?

Treats – Cats love treats, and will actually come to the shaking of the treat jar. The best and healthiest treats are dehydrated meat or fish bits. They add high quality protein to your cat's diet and won't put on weight like carbohydrate based treats. There are many to choose from: **Liv-a-Littles Chicken**, **Wildside Salmon**, **Cat-Man-Doo** bonito (tuna) flakes and many others made from beef, lamb, liver, cod and turkey.

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8050 Lake City Way (206) 524-0199 • 2713 E Madison St (206) 329-8565 • 2127 Queen Anne Av N (206) 283-3959
13510 Aurora Av (206) 267-5090 • 16701 Cleveland St, Redmond (425) 881-2232 • 1590 NW Gilman Blvd, Issaquah (425) 369-8383

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