

BE PATIENT

Your new cat is experiencing many changes all at once. To set your new cat and your family up for success, you must slowly help him/her acclimate to his/her new surroundings. We recommend that for at least two weeks you focus strictly on getting your new cat familiar with your immediate family. Do not force interactions with people or other pets on him/her. A scared cat's options are "fight or flight." Wait and allow your new cat to interact with you and your family when s/he is ready.

AVOID OVERWHELMING SITUATIONS

For at least two weeks **DO NOT**:

- a. Try to integrate your new cat with existing household pets (see cat introduction pamphlet)
- b. Bring your new cat to visit other family members or friends or invite lots of people to over to meet him/her
- c. Take your new pet to the pet store or other public place
- d. Take your new cat for unnecessary car rides. Anne Arundel County Animal Control requires that you take your pet to a veterinarian within 5 business days of adoption for a well cat visit.

Recommendations for Integrating Your New Cat into Your Home



*Thank you
for
Adopting!*

Anne Arundel County
Animal Control

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MEETING NEW PEOPLE INCLUDING CHILDREN

We don't know for certain how your new pet was treated before it arrived at our shelter. Your first goal as the cat's new owner is getting your new pet comfortable with you and his/her place in your immediate family. After a few weeks with your family, slowly start introducing your pet to other new people, one person at a time. All introductions to new adults/children should be done in a calm, quiet and safe setting. Always let the cat approach a new person; never allow the person to approach the cat, as this may make him/her feel cornered. Closely watch your cat's behavior and allow him/her to retreat from any situation where s/he exhibits signs of stress, particular signs of either "fight" (hissing, ears pinned back, swatting) or "flight" (attempting to dart or hide from something/someone). Do not attempt to hold, pick up or move the cat when s/he is trying to escape from an overwhelming situation. Show children (and adults) how to be respectful of your new cat and teach your new cat to respect all people, including children. After initial introductions the cat and new people should be closely supervised. **Children should never be left unattended with an animal.**

CONFINE YOUR CAT

Your new cat should spend the first two weeks in a quiet small room (bathroom or spare bedroom) with all his/her basic needs including at the very least bedding, food, water, a litterbox and toys. Cats tend to get overwhelmed and stress easily when their environment changes. After the first two weeks, if your cat is comfortable in the small room you can consider letting him/her explore other areas of the home for short periods of time under close supervision. If you have other pets, make sure you confine your pets away from your new cat while s/he explores (please see our pamphlet on introducing cats to other pets). Members of your family should take turns going in to visit your new cat either individually or in pairs (children should always be supervised with pets). Cats tend to hide when scared; remember to respect their space. If the cat has chosen to hide in a spot that feels safe, she/he will come out when ready. You can try encouraging your new pet to come out of hiding by providing a different hiding spot, such as a covered bed in an area more accessible to you, or by offering him/her treats.



KEEP YOUR CAT INDOORS

The safest place for your cat is inside your home. Cats face a variety of dangers if allowed outdoors including often severe or deadly injuries from vehicles, other animals and individuals with cruel intentions. Additionally, your cat could get lost. If you would like at some point to allow your cat to go on supervised trips outdoors (after s/he is fully acclimated to your home/family), remember the leash law in Anne Arundel County applies to cats as well as dogs.

LITTERBOX

Change and stressful situations as well as medical issues can sometimes cause previously trained cats to eliminate outside of the litterbox. If the cat you have adopted is not using the litterbox properly when you get it home, be patient, there are a few things that could be causing the issue:

- A shortage of litterboxes: If you have multiple cats, you should have multiple litterboxes (one per cat plus one)
- Concerns with the Litterbox: Cleanliness, type of litter, size or type of litterbox
- Your cat is not comfortable with the location of the litterbox or the litterbox is not easily accessible

Always make sure your veterinarian is aware of issues with the litterbox as it can also be a sign of medical conditions.