



## **Welcoming Your Adopted Cat**

Congratulations on welcoming a new cat into your life! Orange County Animal Care Services (OCAC) wishes you and your newly adopted cat many happy and healthy years together. To help you start off on the right foot, we have provided this information to ease the transition period for you and your cat.

Adoption is not just the process of selecting your new cat; it continues for the life of the cat - from the ride home, through the first night, meeting friends and neighbors, and learning its unique position within your family. As with all changes, the initial transition period may be confusing for both you and your new cat. Because OCAC wants each adoption to be successful and lasting, we offer you the following information.

Remember that this is just basic information. There are many excellent sources that can provide more in-depth information about specific concerns. Your veterinarian will be an essential resource for routine or emergency medical care and can also provide references for other health and behavior issues. As pet ownership continues in its popularity, more resources are becoming available through bookstores, pet stores, periodicals, and the Internet.

### **COMING HOME**

The day you bring your adopted cat home may be one of the most exciting experiences of its life. Please keep in mind that sudden changes may be frightening to your new cat, especially if a significant amount of time was spent at OCAC. While OCAC staff provides excellent care for all our animals, the unusual sights, sounds, and smells of shelter life may stress many pets. Your cat may be confused as to what is "normal."

Adding to this stressful period is the sudden introduction of new people, a new car, a new house, etc. It is your responsibility to cushion this transition. You might be tempted to show off your new cat to neighbors and shower it with new toys. Please note that too much activity or attention may be overwhelming. Your cat may react in fear or confusion. Signs of this uncertainty may include hiding or excessive shyness. Other reactions could include frantic darting around the new surroundings or escape attempts.

Recognize that these initial behaviors stem from the cat's insecurity. The best approach for reassuring your cat is consistency and patience. Give your cat time to learn about their new environment. Take it slow. You have many years to enjoy your new pet; don't overdo it the first few days.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

The first and most important step as a new pet owner is providing your cat with proper identification. The confusion of a new home may provoke your cat to escape. Your cat's best chance to be reunited with you is an ID tag. Even if your cat will live indoors, it needs an ID tag. A variety of tags is readily available through pet stores, veterinarian offices or mail order. Please be sure to place the ID on your cat's collar. The longer you put it off, the longer your cat is at risk.

Your cat has been implanted with a microchip ID. The chip will remain with your pet if tags become lost, damaged or break. The chip can also prove ownership. Cat licensing is optional and available through OCAC.

### **WHY AN INDOOR CAT?**

OCAC continually sees the effect of the great outdoors on outside or "free-roaming" cats. While some owners insist that it is a cat's natural right to live outdoors, countless numbers of cats are injured and killed every day.

Some of the dangers include:

- Cars - the single greatest killer of free-roaming cats.
- Coyotes - primarily nocturnal, these predators can also hunt during the day. Coyotes live in or travel to urban neighborhoods because food sources exist. The only fail-safe protection is to always keep your cat indoors.
- Dogs - outdoor cats are attacked and killed by both stray and properly confined dogs.
- Catfights - often cause serious injury or infections.
- Disease - there is no control over the diseases to which an outdoor cat may be exposed.

Some other considerations:

- Outdoor cats can attack, injure and kill small wildlife.
- A cat trespassing on private property can be legally trapped or confined.
- The average lifespan for an outdoor cat is three years.
- An indoor cat can live well into its teens and even twenties.

## **CAT-PROOFING**

A typical household can present many dangers to a cat's health. Search your home for anything that your cat could investigate. Please pay particular attention to:

- Electrical outlets, cords, and wires
- Telephone and cable connections
- Medications
- Plastic bags
- Ash-trays
- Other pet's food, dishes or toys
- Food left out on countertops
- Unsecured pantry and cupboard doors
- Reclining or folding furniture
- Holiday decorations
- Window screens: check for looseness
- Children's toys and hardware: small parts can be chewed or ingested
- Chemicals: household cleaners, paint, insecticides, etc.
- Plants: many indoor and outdoor plants may be toxic if ingested
- Wastebaskets/trashcans: invest in containers that close securely
- Clothes dryer: cats enjoy the warmth and small space, check before each use
- Knick-Knacks/figurines: curious paws can sweep these off shelves and tables
- Toilet seats: keep them down to prevent drinking chemically treated water

## **SHOPPING**

Your cat will need a few essentials for its new home:

- Litter box and litter
- Bedding
- Food
- Food dishes/water bowls
- Cleaning supplies
- Scratching post
- Toys: quality counts more than quantity
- Collar or harness: measure your cat prior to purchase
- Grooming supplies
- Extra Identification: have a backup tag ready if the original is lost
- Pet care books: learn about your new breed, behavioral advice and general care

## **A HOME WITHIN A HOME**

It's never too early to start introducing your cat to the habits you want it to learn. No matter the size of your home, your cat needs certain areas it can call its own.

- Sleeping: Your cat needs a "bed" area. Choose an area that is away from foot traffic, but has a good vantage point. This ensures that your cat will not be underfoot, but will still feel a part of the home activities. The bed is also a safe haven for the cat. Respect your cat's need to rest and relax.

- Eating: Place the food bowl in a quiet, low-traffic area and feed your cat on a regular schedule. Teach children to never touch or approach a cat while it is eating.
- Litter box: With patience and consistency, your cat will learn where to relieve itself. Be sure to thoroughly and frequently clean the litter box or your cat may refuse to use it. If an accident happens, thoroughly clean the area. If your cat's sensitive nose detects a previous accident, they may mark it again.

## **THE "CAT FILE"**

When you adopted your cat from OCAC you received several important documents. Throughout your cat's lifetime, you will compile a collection of medical and other records. Creating a "cat file" ensures that all the important information will be gathered in one easily accessible package. It may also prove invaluable in an emergency. Also take a few pictures of your cat to include in the file. If your cat becomes lost, pictures are an important part of the search process.

## **CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST WEEK**

- Contact a local veterinarian and schedule your cat's initial exam.
- Locate your local emergency pet hospital and place their contact information in a convenient place.
- Continue to cat-proof your home.
- Allow your cat to explore your home gradually.
- Inform neighbors that you now own a cat (extra help if your cat gets lost).
- Continue to learn as much about your new cat as possible by using resources such as research books, magazines and the Internet. Most importantly, observe your cat. The more you watch your cat's behavior the better you will understand the cat itself.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

### With Other Cats

Some cats will not immediately accept a newcomer as "one of their own." Patience is the key. Try to prevent problems rather than trying to solve situations later. Depending on the cat, the process may take several days or weeks.

- Before beginning introductions, provide each cat with its own bowl, toys, bed, etc. This reduces the chance of territorial disputes.
- Begin with the new cat isolated in a small room. Allow the existing cat the same freedom as before, but do not allow it access to the new cat.
- Allow the new cat to explore its restricted area. The cats will become aware of one another without the possibility of confrontation.
- Visit both cats. Avoid favoritism. Provide equal attention and affection.
- Gradually allow the cats to see each other (through a screen door, glass door, or baby gate). Hissing, posturing or growling may occur. Do not leave them unsupervised.
- If a fight breaks out, stay out of it. Make loud noises and use water or a towel to separate them. If serious fighting occurs or if the cats do not accept each other within a transitional period of a few weeks, consult a veterinarian.
- Hostile behavior should settle down. Watch for signs of continued stress such as: rapid fire eating, excessive grooming, spraying, whimpering, and hiding.

### With Children

Safe introductions between children and cats require education and supervision. Teach children responsible behavior around cats. The following should be strict rules:

- Never disturb a cat while it is sleeping or eating.
- Treat cats gently and kindly.
- Never hit or strike a cat.
- Never pull a cat's tail, ears or hair. Cats can be easily hurt and do feel pain.
- Speak softly, do not shriek or scream at a cat.
- Respect a cat's need for peace and quiet.

## **WHAT IF YOUR CAT BECOMES LOST?**

Do not rely on your cat finding its way back home; it may not have time to realize where "home" is. As many dangers exist in the outside world, conduct an immediate, thorough and persistent search.

- Check with neighbors and service people. Do not overlook the neighborhood children - sometimes they have important information.
- Visit OCAC. Physically check all cat holding areas and inquire at the kennel office (impounded injured cats may be off-site at a veterinarian, but a record of impounds are kept.)
- Search for your lost cat online at [www.ocpetinfo.com](http://www.ocpetinfo.com).
- Post flyers that include a picture throughout your neighborhood. If allowed, post notices with local veterinarians and pet stores. Be sure to verify with your city that it is ok to post flyers.
- Check other local animal shelters. Sometimes lost cats travel further than expected.
- Contact the Animal Assistance League at (714) 978-PETS. The volunteers can take a report of your lost cat, check their records, and post a lost notification.
- Continue to check shelters daily. Some well-meaning citizens keep lost cats for a few days before turning them in.
- Scan the "Found" sections of local papers. Remember, your cat can be described many ways.
- Place a "Lost" ad in local newspapers. Describe your cat in simple terms (apricot: light orange; smoke: gray; tabby: striped) and include distinguishing marks.
- Do not give up - cats have been recovered months after being lost!

## **WHAT IF THE CAT IS NOT WORKING OUT?**

If you are experiencing problems with your new cat, re-examine your expectations. Realize that your cat may have developed bad habits prior to arriving at OCAC. It will take time and patience to develop new habits and adapt to a new environment.

Also remember that inappropriate behavior may result from the stress of transition. Some cats will settle down after they realize your home is their home. This may take days, weeks or months, depending on the cat and its history. Be sure that you give your new cat many chances to learn before you consider giving up on it.

## **A FINAL NOTE**

OCAC wishes you and your cat a happy, healthy life together. We know from experience that "shelter cats" often prove to be some of the greatest pets we know. If you and your cat become one of the many success stories, let OCAC know and be sure to encourage others to welcome an adopted pet into their lives.



## Alteration After-Care for Cats Animal Care Services

All cats adopted from the Animal Care Center have been spayed or neutered before leaving for their new homes. Although these are routine surgeries, they are still considered major surgery. Because of this, your pet needs special care and attention. Be sure to follow ALL directions below. If you have any questions, please call the Animal Care Center Clinic at 714-935-6848 (Monday-Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

### **General Post Surgery Instructions:**

- Your cat may seem sleepy or less active. This is probably a lingering effect of the anesthesia, which wears off at different times for each animal. Confine your cat to a small indoor room. Keep it warm and comfortable. Do not let it rest on cold, hard floors. Provide a blanket to prevent chills.
- Your cat needs rest and quiet. No running, rough play or other major activity.
- Your cat's strength should start returning the day after surgery. Expect normal behavior within 48 hours of the surgery. If you do not feel your pet is acting normal by 48 hours after the surgery, please see your veterinarian.
- Continue to restrict activity for 2 weeks after surgery.

### **Food and Water**

- Feed your cat small amounts of food frequently to avoid the cat from gorging.
- Your cat may not have a normal appetite until 48 hours after surgery.

### **Sutures (Stitches)**

- Females: the surgeon usually closes the incision with sutures placed under the skin that do not need to be removed. This reduces irritation to the skin and annoyance to your pet.
- Males: no sutures were used.
- Occasionally surgical staples will need to be placed in females. Please check you pet's belly to see if there are staples. If so, they will need to be removed in 10-14 days. This can be done at your regular veterinarian's office.

### **Accidental Mating After Surgery**

- A female cat can be spayed while she is in heat. After the surgery, she can not get pregnant. However, the hormones have not disappeared from her body, so she can still attract males for up to 2 weeks.
- An accidental mating can cause serious, even life-threatening injury to a female cat.

If you have a concern during business hours, please contact our veterinary staff at (714) 935-6848.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What is a spay/neuter?

A spay refers to removing the uterus and ovaries. This procedure stops the heat cycles and prevents female cats from becoming pregnant. A neuter is the surgical removal of the testicles (castration).

### Why Sterilize?

Millions of dogs and cats are killed every year due to pet overpopulation. Many of the unwanted animals are the direct result of unplanned, unwanted breeding. Altered animals live longer, healthier lives. These surgeries prevent certain cancers, infections, and other illnesses. Altering often leads to positive changes in pets. Neutered male cats are less likely to mark their territory by spraying. Spayed females do not yowl to attract mates. Sterilized cats are also less likely to roam and get hit by cars, eaten by coyotes, hurt from fights, etc. if you have a female cat, it has been identified as being spayed by using a drop of tattoo ink at the incision site. This helps veterinarians to know that your cat has been spayed.

### When to Sterilize?

Cats can be sterilized as young as 6 weeks. The younger a cat is sterilized, the better chance it has of avoiding diseases and negative behaviors. Cats that are ill should not undergo the stress of surgery, as this can make the illness worse.

### There is a swelling at the incision site. Should I be concerned?

Some swelling is normal and should be expected. If it becomes excessive, oozes, feels hot to the touch, or if your cat is acting ill (decreased activity and/ or appetite), please consult your veterinarian.

### My cat keeps licking at the incision site. Is this a problem?

Constant licking can irritate the area and cause a delayed healing of the site or the incision to open. Ask your veterinarian about a special collar that will prevent your cat from licking and allow the incision to heal.

### There is a little blood at the incision site. Is this normal?

A small amount of dried fluid or blood is normal for the first night after the surgery. However, if oozing continues, consult your veterinarian.

Please remember that any expenses incurred after adoption are YOUR responsibility. Please call us and let us know if you need emergency services.

**\*\*Reminder-** You receive a free health examination from veterinarians who are a member of the Southern California Medical Association (SCVMA). For more information, please review your adoption packet.

## After-Hours Emergency veterinary Hospitals:

<b>Orange County Emergency Pet Clinic</b> <b>1471 S. Harbor Boulevard</b> <b>Fullerton, CA 92835</b> <b>(714) 441-2925</b>	<b>Animal Urgent Care of South Orange County</b> <b>28025 Hillcrest</b> <b>Mission Viejo, CA 92692</b> <b>(949) 364-6228</b>
<b>Orange County Emergency Pet Clinic</b> <b>12750 Garden Grove Boulevard</b> <b>Garden Grove, CA 92843</b> <b>(714) 537-3032</b>	<b>All-Care Referral Center</b> <b>18449 Amistad Street</b> <b>Fountain Valley, CA 92708</b> <b>(714) 774-6200</b>



## TICKS



Ticks are tiny parasites that attach to the skin of people and animals to feed on blood. They live in dense high vegetation, gardens, yards, parks, and kennels, and attach to people and pets as they pass by. Ticks can be a problem year-round but may be especially problematic in the summer.

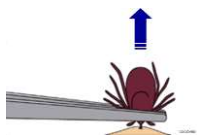
Ticks can cause local irritation and infection but also can transmit potentially dangerous diseases to people and pets. Control and prevention of ticks is extremely important in reducing the risk of disease associated with ticks. This includes removing the tick as soon as possible.

OC Animal Care has protocols in place to address the control of fleas and ticks. As peak tick season approaches with the start of spring/summer, environmental treatment is initiated at the shelter. In addition, during the season, all dogs are treated with a topical flea and tick control product at adoption or when fleas or ticks are found on the dog.

No tick control method is 100% effective. Ticks are extremely resistant to most pesticides and are very adept at hiding in inaccessible areas such as in cracks, crevices, and underbrush. If you notice a tick on your adopted dog, please consult with your veterinarian for appropriate treatment and control measures.

### **TICK REMOVAL**

- Use a pair of tweezers or special tick removal instrument to remove an attached tick. This is important because you do not want to crush
- the tick and force harmful bacteria to leave the tick and enter the bloodstream. Do not touch the tick since diseases can be transmitted. Consider wearing gloves when removing a tick.
- With a tweezers, grab the tick as close to the head as possible. Do not grasp the tick by the body. Without jerking, pull firmly and steadily directly outward. Do not twist as you are pulling. Frequently, pieces of skin may come off with the tick.
- If the head of the tick remains in the skin, try to grab it and remove as much as possible. It is not life threatening if you are unable to remove the entire head. Your pet's immune system will try to dislodge the head and may create a site of infection. If you are concerned, contact your family veterinarian.
- After removing the tick, place it in a jar of alcohol to kill it. Flushing ticks down the toilet will not kill them.
- Clean the bite with a disinfectant.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- **WRONG WAY TO REMOVE TICKS** – Do not use your fingers. The contents of the tick can transmit disease.
- Once a tick is removed, it is common for a welt and skin reaction to occur, it may take a week or more for it to completely heal. The skin irritation is due to the irritating and destructive tick saliva. Do not be worried about the tick head staying in; it rarely happens. The swelling is due to toxic saliva, not toxic heads.



## PREVENTION

- Topical tick control for pets – Ask your veterinarian about the best product for your pet.
- Examine pets for ticks.
- Remove ticks immediately.
- Keep grass and bushes trim and remove mulch and leaf litter.
- Avoid tall grass or brush when walking or hiking.
- If you have a tick infestation, the environment will need to be treated, including the house, yard, your pet's bedding, as well as your pet. See your veterinarian or exterminator for safe and effective treatment options.

**CAUTION: SOME FLEA AND TICK CONTROL PRODUCTS FOR DOGS CAN BE DEADLY TO CATS!! ONLY USE A PRODUCT LABELED FOR THE SIZE & TYPE OF ANIMAL THAT YOU ARE TREATING! ALWAYS ASK YOUR VETERINARIAN BEFORE USING ANY MEDICATION!**





## Vaccine and Parasite Treatment Information

Thank you for adopting or redeeming your cat or dog from the Orange County Animal Care Center. Our staff has cared for and provided any necessary medical treatment for your pet. This letter will provide you and your veterinarian with an understanding of the vaccinations and flea/tick control preparations that your pet has received.

**DOGS** have been vaccinated against the following diseases:

- \* Distemper
- \* Hepatitis
- \* Leptospirosis
- \* Parvovirus
- \* Parainfluenza
- \* Bordetella
- \* Rabies- when 4 months or older

**CATS** have been vaccinated against the following diseases:

- \* Rhinotracheitis
- \* Calici Virus
- \* Panleukopenia
- \* Rabies- when 2 months or older

Dogs and cats have been treated with Advantage for external parasite control and Drontal Plus/Drontal for internal parasite control. Advantage is applied topically for flea control in dogs or cats that are at least 8 weeks old. Drontal Plus is administered orally to deworm dogs weighing at least 2.0 lbs. Drontal is administered orally to deworm cats weighing at least 1.5 lbs. Dogs observed with ticks and are at least 7 weeks of age are treated with Advantix for tick control. Advantix is never to be used on cats. Please do not bathe or allow your pet to be immersed in water for at least 48 hours. Fleas or ticks should die within 48 hours following topical application. It is recommended to re-treat your pet monthly with a flea and/or tick preventative.

If you adopted an animal from OC Animal Care, please remember to use your free veterinary exam by an outside SCVMA veterinarian to help provide you with information based on your individual pets' needs for further vaccine and parasite control.

- \* **All female dogs and cats adopted from and spayed at the Orange County Animal Care Center are tattooed at the incision site. A small drop of tattoo ink is applied to the incision and leaves behind a faint blue or black line indicating that this animal has been altered. Should your pet ever return to a shelter or be transferred to a new home, tattooing alerts shelters, rescue groups and other veterinarians to the fact that sterilization has already been performed thereby eliminating the possibility of this animal undergoing anesthesia needlessly.**