



BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW KITTEN



For easier reading, we'll call your new adoptee Morris.

After arriving home; put Morris into a small room - a 'safe room' - so he can familiarize himself with his new surroundings (smells, sounds, etc.). It is not uncommon for a cat to hide when entering a new home; however, it all depends on its age, temperament, and past experiences. They will usually adapt in just a few hours, but there are those that may take days, weeks and sometimes longer. Don't be dismayed or give up; they always adjust!

Kittens usually need less time to adjust to new surroundings, but follow the instructions your Cat Support Network representative provided specifically for this kitten. Place the hard plastic carrier you brought him home in on the floor of the 'safe room' making sure that all windows, screens and adjoining doors are closed. Set his water & dry food on the floor next to the box and place his litter pan nearby, but not too close. Open the door to his carrier and quietly speak "sweet nothings" to him. Your tone of voice is very important. Some kittens will not hesitate to explore right away, while others may not come out for hours or longer. Some may only come out long enough to eat or relieve themselves. If you find the later one is the case, give him more time to adjust. Leave the room and then re-enter it 30 minutes later. If he wants affection at this point, you'll know it; however, don't force your affections on him if he's not ready. He'll be bugging you soon enough. Once he responds to you, and you have no animals to introduce him to, leave the door ajar to the room. He may emerge from the room only to turn and run quickly back in. Don't be alarmed at this reaction; it is not uncommon. Allow him to explore the rest of the house in his own good time. As hard as it may be, do not let him out until he responds to you. If you let Morris out before he has warmed to you, he may hide in a place that you're unable to access, only making it harder to bond. Spend this time making friends and gaining his trust, not coaxing him out from under a bed. It is easier to interact with him in a small area where you can actually talk to him -- all the while petting/stroking him. Be patient, don't push too hard; it takes time to build a relationship.

Vaccinations

The kittens rescued by Cat Support Network have all received at least one distemper shot called an FVRCP. Depending on their age and when they had their first shots, some may require additional vaccinations. After the vaccination schedule is complete, your kitten does require an annual booster. A kitten cannot have a rabies vaccination until four months of age. Discuss with your veterinarian the pros and cons of getting vaccines for rabies and leukemia. If there is the slightest chance your little one could escape into the outdoors, don't take a chance. Another deadly disease that is unfortunately becoming more common is FIP. Another good reason to make sure your kitten stays indoors.

Feeding Instructions

Your kitten has been provided a nutritious dry food, and most likely a wet food to match. It is very important that you not alter his diet immediately. For the first year to year and a half you should keep Morris on a food for kittens. Morris will need a well-balanced, high-quality dry food. Grocery brands are often too high in potassium, magnesium & sodium -- creating heart problems or disorders of the kidneys & bladder. Find a dry food with ash content 5.5% or lower. Too much ash in the diet and not enough water can lead to cystitis (a bladder infection). Male cats are especially prone to this. Make sure the food you choose has taurine. Kittens should always have a supply of fresh water available to them. A good supply of supplemental moisture is canned food, which is often between 80-70% water. It is important that you **not** feed your kitten fish-based wet foods. Once they have a taste for fish, it is very hard to provide anything but. Also, mercury can build up in their systems, just like humans. Morris may have a tendency to eat small meals throughout the day, so leave his dry food out to free feed. He's a carnivore and may enjoy a diet of canned food, just don't overdue it. Many canned foods are high calorie which can encourage too much weight gain. Nutrition is very important if you want him to live a long, healthy life!

Scratchers

All kittens will find and use items around our homes to scratch on if not given adequate scratching tools. They are not doing this to be destructive, but do it for a three-fold purpose: exercise, removing old nail sheaths and marking. The key is to give them items that are "ok" to scratch. Purchasing scratchers alone or scratchers with toys on them is great. However, if they don't like the scratcher you made or purchased don't quit there. Find one they do like; it doesn't have to be elaborate. Varieties include: kitty trees, corrugated cardboard with catnip. Remember you are trying to encourage good habits, start with something cheap and work up. When you find him using the scratchers praise him like you would your canine friend. Positive reinforcement is everything. If he doesn't use the right item, don't scream, hit or throw things. This will only frighten or confuse him. Remember, positive reinforcement is everything. Praise, praise and more praise. If all else fails, get a squirt bottle or squirt gun. When caught in the act - and only when caught in the act - say a loud "no!" and give him one quick squirt to his body, not his face. You could also shake a rock or marble filled can or drop a magazine on the floor. These methods intrude on where his concentration was; upsets him and he learns from repetition, that is why praise and love work so well and are the preferred method. Sooner or later he will get the hint. Remember, positive reinforcement is the key.

Carriers

Always use a hard plastic carrier or well-built canvas carrier to transport Morris. A car backfiring or even a dog barking could scare him right out of your arms and into busy traffic. Some have been known to keep running, never to be seen again. Or worse. Don't take the chance. These can be purchased new for as little as \$20. As you kitten grows they can escape from a cardboard carrier in under a minute.