

EM4809E

4-H CAT PROJECT

unit one

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



4-H Member
Name _____

Club Name _____

THIS MANUAL IS TO BE USED
THROUGHOUT YOUR 4-H
CAREER IN THIS PROJECT. AN
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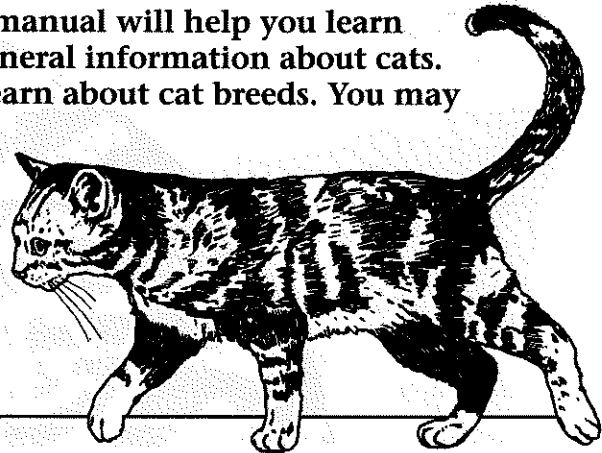
4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Cat Project Unit One Manual

Dear Leaders and Parents: This manual will show the new 4-H Cat Project member how to care for a cat. It also contains pictures of different cat breeds. The 4-H member is expected to do some research beyond this manual. Breed information is easy to find in the many cat books available from your local libraries or bookstores. Information is also available on the Internet. Some interesting web sites are maintained by various breed associations and pet food manufacturers. See the back page of this manual for some suggestions. As a leader, check to make sure the breed information is from the United States, not Great Britain or elsewhere, because international breed standards vary. This book was written at a Junior (Grades 3-5) level, but includes information needed by all levels.

Welcome to the 4-H cat project! This manual will help you learn how to care for a cat, and contains general information about cats. Use other sources of information to learn about cat breeds. You may color the cat pictures.



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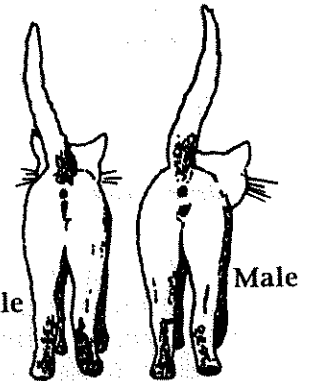
BRINGING HOME A NEW CAT

To have fun and do a good job with your cat project, you will need to give your cat lots of attention. If you give your cat plenty of understanding and affection, it will give you affection and love in return. The 4-H cat project accepts all cats, household pets or purebreds. 4-H cats do not have to be sterilized, though it is strongly encouraged. Declawed cats are also accepted, although we do not encourage this. Always keep in mind that the cat must be safe to handle for the owner/handler and the judge.

If you do not already have a cat, you must decide what kind to get. Kittens are playful and fun to watch. They are easy to train and adjust to a new home and family fairly quickly. Older cats will be quieter than kittens and already trained, but need more time to become used to their new home and owner.

You will also have to decide whether you want a long-haired or short-haired cat. Long-haired cats are generally more calm and showy, but they require daily brushing and combing. Short-haired cats require just a little brushing.

Should you choose a male or female? Male cats are usually more cozy and friendly, while females are generally more cautious. Males tend to be a little larger than females. Unless you are planning on breeding, you should sterilize your pet; neutering male cats is generally less expensive than spaying females. Sterilizing usually produces a more mellow, healthier animal. In addition, male cats tend to live longer if neutered and have fewer objectionable habits like spraying and fighting. You can tell a cat's sex by looking just under its tail. The two openings on a male cat look like a colon (:); on a female they look like an upside-down exclamation point (¡).



When you bring the cat to its new home, it will need some time to settle in. Allow it to explore its new home, but do not let it go outdoors for several days.

Cats have different personalities. Some prefer to be the only cat in the house; some are lonely or bored as the only cat. The effect of getting a second cat is unpredictable. You will need patience and common sense. A good way to handle the first meeting is to confine the first pet while the newcomer roams around. Then pick up the new cat and release the other pet. DO NOT have this first meeting at mealtime. Stand close by in case of serious problems. It is also wise to have a blanket ready to throw over them if they fight, and to clip their claws before the introduction. Be especially careful when introducing a kitten to a dog, as the dog could easily injure or even kill the kitten. If the pets don't get along, confine the newcomer to a wire "play-pen" for a few days, until the animals become used to each other.

Always use separate food and water dishes for each pet. Even if they are friends, they may still be protective of their food. A separate litter box also may be needed.



EQUIPMENT

Carrier

You will need a carrier to bring your new cat home in. A cat that is loose in a car could distract the driver and cause an accident. The carrier should be well-ventilated, large enough for the cat to turn around in, and easy to clean. It should also be lightweight, and have sturdy handles and latches. A carrier made of plastic, wire mesh, or wood is best for strength and easy cleaning. A cardboard carrier is okay for short trips, such as going to the veterinarian, but it must be thrown away when it gets dirty. Always cover the bottom of the carrier with a clean towel.

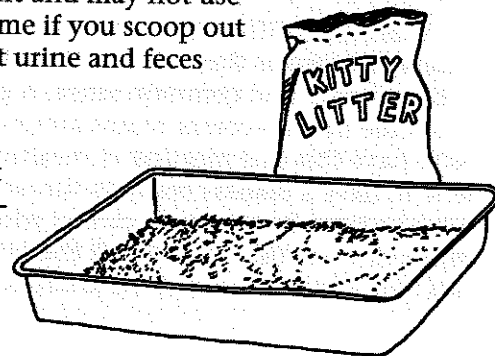
Bed

Fancy cat beds can be purchased at a pet store, but they are expensive and not always appreciated by the cat. Most cats are happy in a cardboard box padded with a blanket or a cushion. The box should be large enough for the cat to turn around in. The sides of the box should be fairly high so the cat feels cozy and safe. If you have a young kitten, cut down one side of the box so the kitten can get in and out easily. The more it seems like a cave, the safer the cat will feel. Put a warm, washable blanket such as an old baby blanket in the box. Your cat will arrange the blanket to suit itself. Wash the blanket often to keep it clean and free of fleas. Do not use scented detergents, as the cat may not like the scents. Locate the bed in an area that is warm, quiet, and free of drafts. Place it several inches off the floor to avoid drafts, cold, and dampness.

Litter box

You may buy a specially made litter box or use a plastic or enameled pan. It should be large enough so the cat can turn around and still keep their back end in the box. It should be deep enough so the litter won't spill or be tossed out of the box. A good size for an average cat is about fourteen inches square and six inches deep. Fill it with about two inches of litter. You can use sand, shredded newspaper, dirt, or wood shavings in the box, but most people prefer to use commercial cat litter because it isn't as messy and controls odors better. Be cautious when using scented litter as many cats find the scents unpleasant and may not use the litter box. You can leave the litter in the box a long time if you scoop out the soiled parts and leave the rest of the litter. Remove cat urine and feces every day because cats don't like to use dirty litter boxes.

Clean the litter box with hot soapy water and rinse it well. At least once a month, disinfect the box. Use a disinfectant that won't hurt your cat. Dilute bleach is a good disinfectant, but the box must be well-aired before the cat can use it.



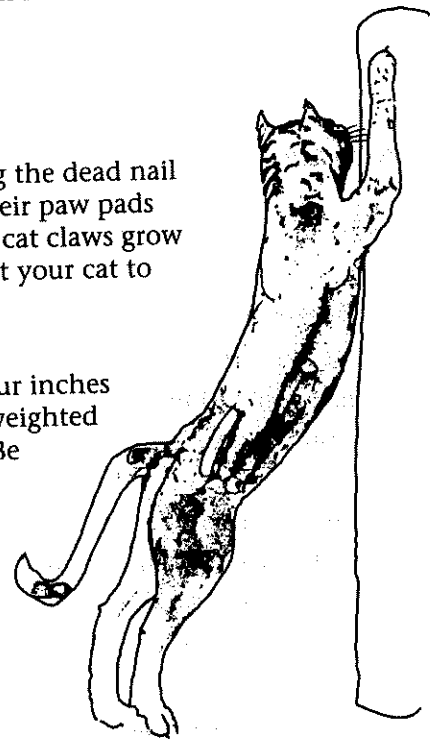
Food and Water Dishes

These should be heavy so they can't be tipped over. They should be easy to clean and should be washed every day. They should be big enough so the cat can get its head in the dish without touching its whiskers. Some cats will not use a bowl if they think it is too small. Two or more cats can share a water dish, but each cat needs its own food dish.

Scratching Post

When cats scratch, they sharpen their claws by shedding the dead nail and cuticle. They also mark their territory with scent from their paw pads and exercise their leg muscles. Just like your own fingernails, cat claws grow all the time and scratching wears them down. You don't want your cat to scratch furniture, so train it to use a scratching post.

You can buy a post or make one. Use a piece of wood four inches square and about two feet long. Attach it firmly to a sturdy weighted base. Cover it with a carpet remnant—heavy pile, not shag. Be sure the nails don't stick up as they might hurt your cat. You could put a catnip toy at the top of the post or spray it with catnip spray to encourage your cat to use the post. Another way to encourage use of the scratching post is to place it in a prominent location. This way the cat is marking territory on an acceptable object.



Collar, Harness, Leash

If you let your cat outdoors, you may want to put a collar on it. You can attach a tag with your name and phone number to the collar so your cat can be returned if it gets lost. The collar has to fit well. If it is too loose, the cat can get the collar caught in its mouth or get a leg caught in it. If the collar is too tight, it can choke the cat or rub off the fur around its neck.

Flea collars may get rid of a few fleas, but many also cause skin rashes or make your cat sick. Check with your veterinarian to determine which once-a-month flea control will be best for your cat.

You are required to have a harness and leash on your cat at all times when you are at a 4-H show, county fair, or state fair. The leash must be attached to the harness on one end and the other end of the leash must be attached to the cage or looped over your wrist. The "H" style harness is the safest. It should be made of soft leather, nylon, or elastic. Like the collar, the harness should fit well; it should not be too loose or too tight. The leash should be lightweight and made of leather or nylon.



Toys

There are many toys that you can buy or make for your cat. A list of safe toys is in the safety section of this book.



Grooming Tools

We will talk more about grooming tools later, but you will need:

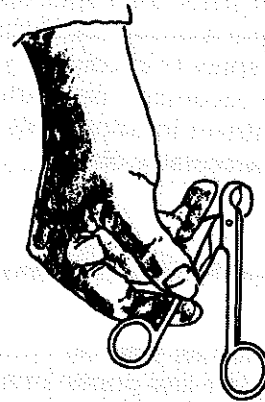
For a short-haired cat:

- natural bristle brush
- fine-toothed flea comb
- chamois, or silk/nylon pad or cloth

For a long-haired cat:

- wide-toothed metal comb
- mat splitter (a crochet hook or seam ripper will work)
- fine-toothed flea comb

You may use nail clippers especially made for cat claws, or those made for human fingernails. NEVER use scissors.



First Aid Kit

- rectal thermometer
- petroleum jelly/sterile lubrication gel (not carbolated)
- medicine dropper
- alcohol/hydrogen peroxide
- cotton balls and swabs
- bandages and gauze
- antiseptic (recommended by your veterinarian)
- hairball medication (recommended by your veterinarian)

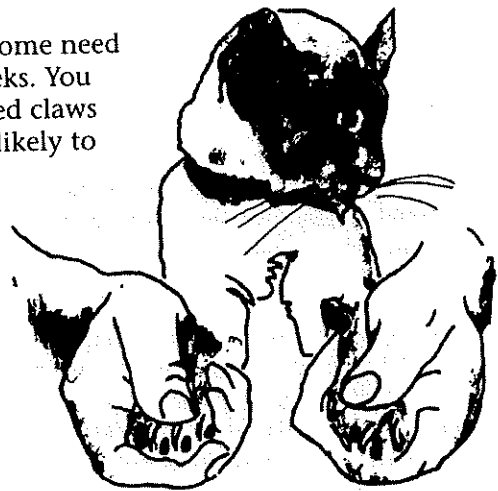


Grooming your cat is very important, and you should do it every day. This can be a special time for you and your cat. Grooming helps keep your cat healthy. If done every day, it also helps you find any injury or illness right away. Daily grooming does not always have to be a full show grooming. You can simply pet your cat all over, and check all grooming points.

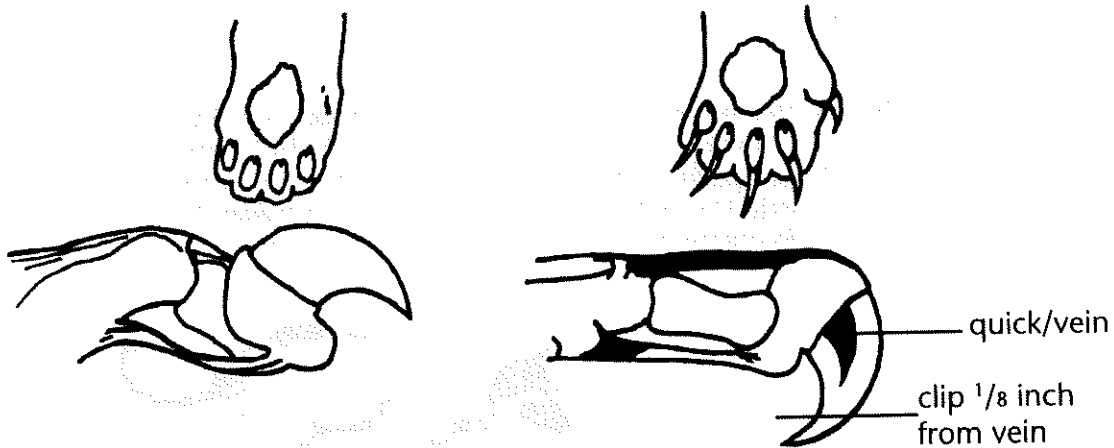
Claws

All cats need to have their claws clipped regularly. Some need to be clipped every week, others can go two or three weeks. You should check your cat's claws every day. Cats with clipped claws can still climb trees and defend themselves, but are less likely to hurt you accidentally.

Very gently press your cat's paw; the claws will extend. You may then clip them one at a time. Don't forget the first claw in front. Some cats will sit still while you clip their claws. Others will squirm. If your cat is a squirmer, have someone help hold it while you clip the claws.



Each claw should be clipped to within $\frac{1}{8}$ inch of the quick/vein. The vein is the pink area inside the claw. Do not clip too close to this area because that would hurt the cat. You may use a pet nail clipper or one made for humans (hold these parallel to the nail to avoid splitting). Do not use scissors.



Ears

Because cats cannot clean the inside of their ears, wax and dirt build up. Use a dry cotton ball to wipe the wax and dirt from the inside of your cat's ears. Have an older 4-H member or adult help you. Cotton swabs can be used with caution. Clean only what you can see and stop if your cat acts like it hurts. NEVER use hydrogen peroxide in an ear and do not use alcohol in an ear that is reddened or infected.

If your cat has black crusty wax, or scratches its ears a lot, it may have ear mites and you should call your veterinarian. If your cat does have ear mites, your veterinarian will clean and treat your cat's ears, and prescribe medicine to use at home.

Coat

Groom your cat's fur every day. Daily grooming will keep your cat from getting hairballs and mats. Daily grooming also gives you a great chance to check your cat over for injuries, parasites, and other possible problems.

To groom a short-haired cat, you will need a soft brush and a cloth. Simple petting is also good. Pet your cat from head to tail to loosen the dead hair. With a soft brush, brush from head to tail, including the sides and stomach, in the direction the hair grows. This should remove most of the dead hair. Finish by going over your cat with a cloth. Chamois or a rough washcloth works well. This will pick up the last of the loose hairs and dust. Frequent petting will give your cat a good shine.

To groom your long-haired cat, gently brush with a nylon or natural bristle brush. Do not use a metal brush, since this will break the hairs and scratch the skin. Follow the brushing with combing. A metal comb made for cats is best. Be sure to comb the entire cat, including the stomach, armpits, and pants. If you do not comb your long-hair every day, mats (tangles) will form. They are very difficult to get out.

If your cat's coat does become matted, work at the mats very gently, starting at the outside edge of the mat, working toward the skin using a metal comb. Do not pull the skin. Sometimes applying a pet hair detangler or cream rinse may help to untangle mats. If the mat is too tangled, get someone to help you. Sometimes mats have to be cut away. Be very careful not to cut the skin. Mats may become so tangled that your veterinarian will have to remove them.

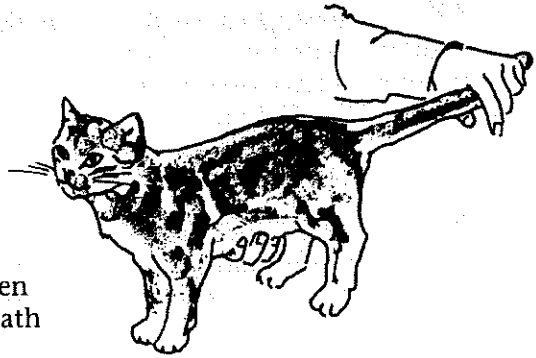


Eyes, Nose

Finish grooming by using a cottonball moistened with tap water to wipe away any mattering near the eyes or nose.

Bathing

Most cats will not need a routine bath, unless they get into something that won't come out any other way (like oil). A flea bath will kill the fleas on the cat, but will not keep new ones off. (See section on parasites for information on flea control.) When you start showing your cat, you will usually give it a bath before the show.



Most cats do not like to have a bath. You will probably need help. It is usually easier to have the bath area set up before getting your cat, as most cats do not like running water. You may use the bathtub or the kitchen sink. You will need two containers of warm water. These may be the two sides of the sink, or two buckets, or pans in a bathtub. You should also have several large towels. Only use shampoo clearly labeled as safe for cats. Many shampoos (especially ones made for people) contain laurel sulfate which is mildly toxic to cats. The residue left behind after bathing can cause vomiting in cats. Put the cat in the water so that the body, legs, and tail are wet. Do not put the head under water! As soon as the cat is wet, take it out of the water and set it on the drainboard (kitchen) or in the tub (bathroom).

Now lather your cat with the shampoo. Do not get any soap in the cat's eyes or ears. Then put the cat back in the water and rinse off the soap. If you need to rinse the head, use a plastic cup to pour the water over the head. Guard the cat's eyes with your hand to keep the soapy water out of them. When the rinse water becomes soapy, put the cat in the second sink or bucket of water and rinse all the soap out of the coat.

Take your cat out of the water and gently press the fur against the body to squeeze water out of the coat. Wrap your cat in a towel and blot it dry. Repeat this with several towels. Long-haired cats are harder to dry than short-haired cats. When your cat is as dry as you can get it with towels, put it in a clean cat carrier. Put the carrier near a heater until the cat is completely dry. Do not put the cat too close to the heater. You want it to be warm, not hot! Most cats are frightened by a hair dryer. If your cat likes it, you may use one to help dry your cat's coat. Use the cool/warm setting, keep it 5-6 inches from the cat and move the dryer back and forth so it won't burn your cat's skin.

If your cat gets into paint, tar, or oil take it to the veterinarian. DO NOT use turpentine or gasoline to remove it! This could make your cat very sick or even kill it. As a first aid treatment if you cannot get into the veterinarian's office right away, bathe first with vegetable oil. Then wash out the vegetable oil with a de-greasing soap such as Dawn Dishwashing Liquid. Finally, wash with a cat-safe shampoo.



FEEDING YOUR CAT

When choosing cat food, look for the words "Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that this diet provides complete and balanced nutrition for cats." These brands of food have been tested and proven to be a good diet for the average cat. They are also more expensive. The ingredients used are more digestible so that your cat doesn't have to eat as much to be well-nourished, and there will also be less feces.

Many cheap brands of food have lots of indigestible filler added to the food. The cat will get full but will not have the nutrition it needs to stay in good condition. It may lose weight and will pass almost as much feces as food eaten. Often the hair coat quality is poor when the cat eats cheap food.

There are four basic types of cat food. All of them can be nutritious, but you must carefully read the label. Some will be better for your cat than others. In addition, you should choose a diet that matches your cat's stage of life and activity level.

- Dry food is easiest to feed and probably the most popular form of cat food. It is good for the teeth and gums, giving exercise and helping to prevent tartar build-up. A cat that eats dry food must have plenty of fresh water available at all times. An advantage of dry food is the ease of storage, long storage life, and low cost per feeding. A disadvantage is the high carbohydrate level in the food.
- Maintenance canned food comes in many forms. It is usually complete and balanced for cats, but you must check the label to be sure. The main advantage of canned food is palatability or tastiness. It may also be easier to eat for a cat that is sick or has bad teeth.
- Specialty canned diets are the most palatable diets for cats. They contain more meat and often have strong smells, which are important to cats. Pay close attention to the labels since some are not complete and balanced nutrition. These are more expensive for each feeding.
- Raw diets are available for cats. They contain high amounts of meat and some vegetables. Sometimes they will contain portions of animal organs and intestines. They must not be all meat as this is not a balanced diet and can lead to serious health problems for your cat. It is the most expensive way to feed a cat. They are usually frozen and require special handling for feeding. To feed raw diets you need to consult with a knowledgeable person experienced in feeding these diets.

Cat food now comes in many specific formulations. They can be put into four classes of food:

- *Wellness diets*: These diets are made specially (formulated) for healthy cats at a certain stage of life and nutritional need. For example, there are kitten diets, mature cat diets, and senior cat diets.
- *Special needs diets*: These diets have a special purpose in addition to providing proper nutrition. Examples of these diets are hairball control, tartar control, sensitive skin, and weight loss.



- *Therapeutic diets*: These diets are designed to aid in the treatment of specific medical conditions. These diets can only be gotten through your veterinarian and should be fed only to cats with a diagnosed medical condition. Examples of these would be kidney disease diet, bladder stone diet, and diabetes diet.
- *Snack food or "junk food"*: These foods include cat treats and many of the specialty canned foods plus many of the semi-moist diets. They are not usually balanced diets. Some will say right on the label, "Intended for intermittent feeding only." Just like your own diet, these should be a very small part of your cat's diet, if you even feed them at all.

All of these types of food come in many different flavors. You will soon discover which one your cat likes best. Stay with one flavor since most cats don't really care for variety.

No matter what your cat eats it must always have plenty of fresh water available at all times.

Cats of different ages and conditions need to be fed to fit their individual needs. Kittens need food that is high in protein, minerals, and calories. Growth or kitten diets are specially formulated to provide nutrition needed for kittens. Kittens should be fed 2-3 times a day. Mature cats need less food value; and maintenance diets will be correct for them. Mature cats should be fed once or twice a day. Do not leave food out for them to nibble on free choice. Most cats will become obese (fat) when fed this way. Senior (7 years and older) or inactive cats need a special diet that is lower in calories but still good quality. Senior, Less Active or Light diets are recommended. Again, do not leave food down all the time. Your veterinarian can give you advice on feeding pregnant, lactating, or ill cats.

Hints for Feeding Your Cat

- Always have lots of fresh water available.
- Make sure food is fresh and clean.
- Feed your cat regularly.
- Read the cat food labels to make sure the diet is complete, balanced, and suited to your cat's life stage and weight.



Do NOT feed:

- *milk*—it may cause diarrhea.
- *raw fish*—it destroys vitamin B.
- *raw egg whites*—they destroy important nutrients.
- *bones*—they may splinter or cause constipation, and damage the mouth or stomach.
- *raw meat*—it is low in calcium.
- *tuna alone*—it causes vitamin E deficiencies.
- *dog food*—it does not provide necessary nutrition.
- *table scraps*—they are not a complete and balanced diet.



CAT SAFETY

The Safety Carry

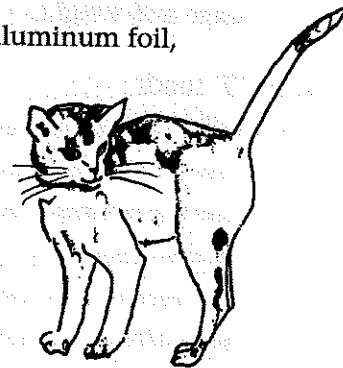
This is a method of carrying your cat so it cannot scratch or get away from you. Grasp the cat's forelegs between your thumb and fingers with at least one finger between the cat's legs. Support the cat's chest in the palm of your hand. Then, you may either tuck the cat's rump and rear legs under your elbow against your body or riding on your hip, with your opposite hand grasping the nape of the cat's neck; or you may hold the cat's rear legs in the same way as the forelegs. Always carry your cat this way in cat shows.

Safety in the House

Keep all poisonous things away from your cat, such as liquid cleaners, rat poisons, and medicine. Keep poisonous plants out of reach. Many are common decorative houseplants, such as dieffenbachia (dumb cane), poinsettia, and bulbs like daffodils, narcissus, and tulips. Many other house plants are poisonous. In addition, some human food is quite toxic like onions, garlic, and chocolate. When in doubt, check with your veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435).

Keep washer and dryer doors closed. ALWAYS check to see if your cat has crawled in while the machine was being loaded. Also keep freezer, refrigerator, cabinet, and closet doors closed.

- Don't let your cat sleep too close to heaters, wood stoves, or fireplaces.
- Don't let your cat chew or pull on electric cords. This may electrocute it or it may pull a heavy object down upon itself.
- Keep garbage out of reach. A cat may eat bones, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, or rubber bands, or may lick empty cans and get a cut tongue.
- Cats may play with pin cushions, needles, thread. Keep these small objects out of reach.
- Second-story or higher windows should be closed or screened so your cat cannot fall or jump out.

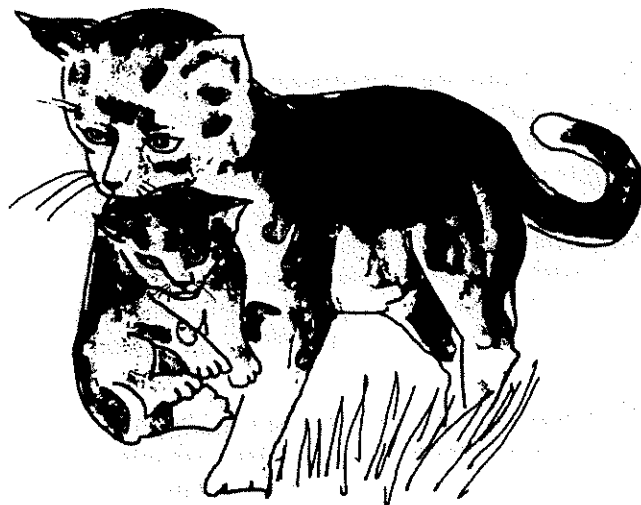


Safety Outdoors

Keep poisonous things out of reach, such as antifreeze (it is sweet and animals will lick it off the ground), slug bait (many types taste like grain), yard sprays, paints, gasoline or turpentine (never use this to clean paint or oil off your cat's coat), motor oil, and rat and mouse poison.

Watch for mechanical dangers like lawn mowers, electric garage doors, abandoned freezers, boxes with heavy lids, fish hooks and line (cats may eat them).

Other potential outdoor hazards are roads (especially after dark), and automobiles (honk the horn or check under your hood before starting your car; cats sometimes crawl there for warmth), dogs or coyotes, traps, and neighbors upset by a cat that digs up their plants or kills birds.



Toys

Safe toys are paper bags, empty thread spools, ping pong balls, feathers, a wad of paper, cardboard tubes, cardboard boxes with holes, unshelled walnuts, rubber cat toys, catnip toys with no glued on or removable parts, and baby bottle nipples.

Dangerous toys are things that can be swallowed or pulled apart, such as string, thread, or yarn, buttons, aluminum foil, rubber bands, Christmas tree ornaments, tinsel, or plastic/foil icicles, small beads, soft rubber or sponge toys, toys with removable parts, plastic bags, cellophane, and any toy small enough to be swallowed.



HEALTH CARE

This section is a general health care guide. Your veterinarian is your final authority on your cat's health.

You should know what your cat looks like and how it acts when it is feeling well. Every day your cat should eat, drink, pass urine and stool, and have some activity. You should know how much and how often your cat eats and drinks. You should know what normal urine and stool are and how many times a day your cat goes to the bathroom. You should pet your cat every day and know how its body feels and where any sensitive areas are. If your cat's appearance or behavior changes, it may be getting sick or be injured. A cat's normal temperature is 100.5–102.5 degrees F. If this goes up, it could be a sign of illness. To be healthy, a cat needs good food, fresh water, exercise, grooming, vaccinations, parasite control, and shelter.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are shots that protect your cat from disease. The first diseases your cat needs protection from are feline panleukopenia (also known as distemper), and rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and chlamydia (grouped together and known as rhino). These are combined into one vaccine called Distemper-Rhino or FVCRP. A kitten should receive its first vaccination at 6 weeks of age followed by a booster one month later. When it is one year old, it should receive a booster. As an adult it will need a booster every one to three years, depending on its lifestyle. Consult with your veterinarian to determine what is right for your cat. If you choose to booster only every three years, make sure the vaccine is approved for three years. If you are showing your cat at 4-H shows, the cat **MUST** have a booster every year.

Rabies is a disease that can be transmitted to other animals and to people. It always results in death. Vaccinate your cat for rabies, whether it lives in the house or outdoors, at 3–6 months of age. This must be repeated one year later. After that, the cat must be vaccinated every three years. If you show your cat at the State 4-H Fair the rabies vaccination must be recorded on a specific form provided by the State 4-H Fair Office.

If your cat goes outside, or you take it places with you, it will be exposed to many other cat diseases. There are vaccinations for several cat diseases. Feline leukemia is the most important. In most cases you should vaccinate to protect your cat from feline leukemia. However, you should first discuss with your veterinarian which additional vaccines are appropriate for your cat. Always test a cat before starting a leukemia vaccination series or when you first get your cat.

Be sure you receive a veterinarian's vaccination certificate for the Distemper-Rhino and rabies vaccinations. You must show these at every 4-H cat show or fair to be allowed to show your cat.



Hairballs

If your cat appears healthy and active, but throws up or loses its appetite, it may have hairballs. Cats get wads of fur in the digestive tract from grooming themselves. You can get hairball medicine from your veterinarian. If the cat does not get better within a week, have it checked by your veterinarian.

Parasites

You should protect your cat from parasites. Cat parasites are other animals that live on cats. Common external parasites are fleas, ticks, ear mites, and lice. Fleas and flea larvae can travel from cat to cat and from a cat to a person. Fleas can live away from the host animal for a long time. They can live in rugs, bedding, or in the yard. Fleas can transmit tapeworm to your cat when the cat grooms itself. To avoid fleas on your cat consult with your veterinarian. Fleas are easily preventable by using one of the "once-a-month" parasite prevention products. These monthly products are much more effective and safer than sprays, dips, powders, or collars. Always read and follow label instructions for the product.

There are several kinds of mites. The most common is the ear mite. Your cat may have ear mites if it shakes its head often, scratches its ears, or has dark, gritty earwax. Your veterinarian can supply you with medicine that will get rid of ear mites.

Ticks are not found on cats very often. If a cat has ticks, they are usually found on the ears, neck, or between the toes. Ticks suck blood from the cat and swell up. There is no secret way to remove ticks; simply pull them off. It is common to have a piece of the head of the tick left in the cat or for the area to be reddened or swollen. These normally clear up without treatment within a week.

Cat lice only infect cats. People cannot get cat lice. Usually, only cats that are in poor condition get lice. There are sucking or biting lice. Your veterinarian can give you a powder to kill the lice, and tell you how to make your cat more healthy.

Internal parasites are called worms. The most common worms are tapeworms and roundworms. If your cat is an outdoor cat, likes to hunt, or has fleas, it will probably have worms. Tapeworms can be seen as small, white objects, about the size of a grain of rice, on the hair under the cat's tail or on its feces. Roundworms can be found in the stool or vomit of cats with severe infestations. Have your cat's feces checked by your veterinarian at least once a year. Your veterinarian will then recommend an appropriate dewormer.

Injuries

If your cat appears to have any kind of injury, especially an injured leg, or cannot move because of its injury, you must be careful. A normally gentle and affectionate cat will suddenly bite when it's in pain. A strange cat is even more likely to bite. To move the cat, use a large



towel or blanket. Cover its head, wrap the cat in the towel and pick it up using enough towel around its head to avoid being bitten. Place the cat in a comfortably sized box and take it to the veterinarian as quickly as possible.

If your cat has a large open wound, put something clean over it and apply pressure. Be very gentle. Your cat may bite you suddenly if it is in pain. Wrap your cat in a blanket and take it to your veterinarian as soon as possible. If your cat gets burned, keep dirt off the burned area and take it to the vet as quickly as possible.

Use hydrogen peroxide to disinfect minor scratches and wounds. Small puncture wounds may be from the bite of another cat. Clean the wounds well with mild soap and warm water or peroxide, then call your veterinarian. These wounds can heal on top and allow the bacteria that have been poked in deeper to grow. When this happens the area will become warm and painful. This is called an abscess and should be treated by your veterinarian.

Spaying and Neutering

Every year thousands of unwanted cats must be destroyed. You can help lessen this problem by spaying or neutering your cat. In addition, your cat will probably be a better pet afterwards.

When you have your female cat spayed, not only is she unable to produce kittens, but she has a lesser chance of getting cancer, and she can't get a uterine infection. Your female cat can be spayed when she is 6 months old. Spaying before this age is acceptable, too.

A neutered male cat will fight less, roam less, and will probably have a longer life. It will also lessen his urge to spray. Your male cat can be neutered at 6 months of age.

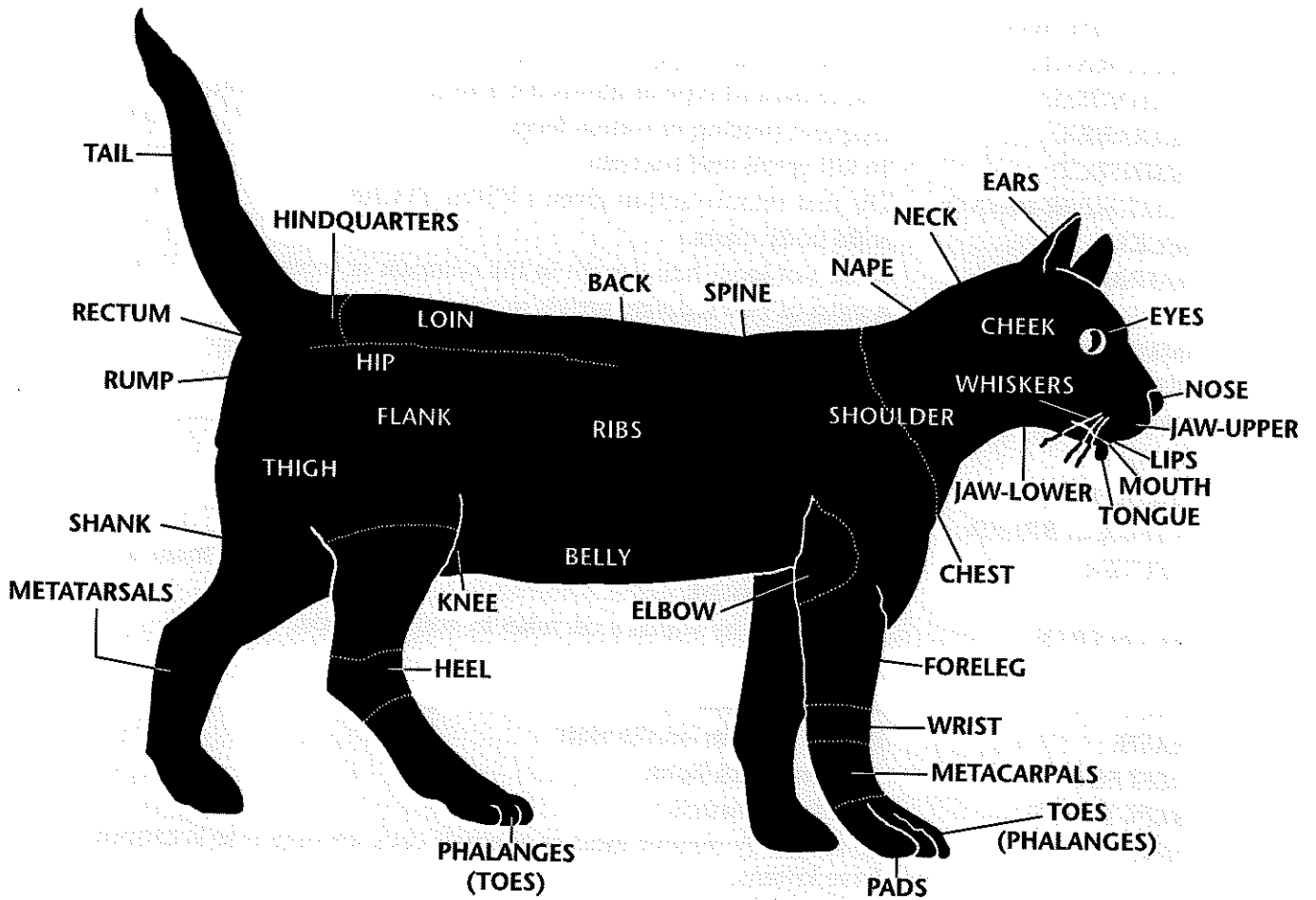


VOCABULARY

ALTERED:	A cat that has been neutered or spayed.
BALANCED DIET:	An even mixture of food needed for good nutrition.
BLADDER STONE:	A small rock-like formation formed from minerals.
CHAMOIS:	A soft piece of leather.
CONSTIPATION:	Feces are hard, dry, and difficult to pass.
DEFICIENCY:	A lack of some important nutrients; can cause illness.
DIAGNOSIS:	The cause and type of illness determined by examination.
DIARRHEA:	Frequent passing of watery feces.
DISINFECT:	To kill germs and bacteria.
DISTEMPER-RHINO:	The first immunization given a kitten; FVCRP.
FECES:	Solid body waste.
HAIRBALL:	A mass of loose hair caught in the stomach or intestine.
HYBRID:	A cross of two separate breeds to produce a third breed.
IMMUNE:	Protected against disease.
INDIGESTIBLE:	Not usable by the body.
LACTATING:	Producing milk to feed young mammals.
MAT:	A thick, tangled mass of hair.
MUTATION:	A change in a breed that alters a characteristic.
NATURAL BREED:	One that developed by itself over a period of time.
NEUTER:	To surgically remove a male cat's sex organs so it cannot make a female pregnant.
NUTRITION:	The process by which a cat takes in and uses food.
PALATABILITY:	Tastiness.
PROTEIN:	Substance made up of amino acids required for life processes.
RASH:	Bumps or welts on the skin.
REFLECT:	To throw back light.
REPUTABLE:	Able to be trusted.
SPAY:	To surgically remove most of a female cat's sex organs so it cannot have kittens.
STERILIZED:	Being made incapable of producing babies.
VACCINE:	A substance (usually given as a shot) that makes an animal immune to a disease.
TARTAR:	A hard coating that forms on teeth.
TRANSFER:	Pass from one location to another.
TRANSMITTED:	Passed from one to another, like the common cold.
URINE:	Liquid body waste.
VENTILATED:	Having openings to allow fresh air to enter.
VETERINARIAN:	A licensed professional who medically or surgically treats animals.



PARTS OF THE CAT



Parts of the Cat

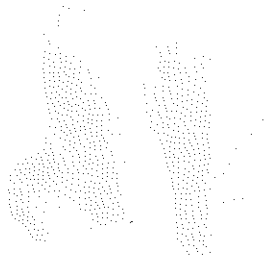
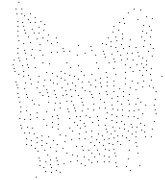
- Nose:** Nostrils for breathing, also used to detect heat and cold by touching as well as by sense of smell.
- Eyes:** Cats have very good sight in dim light. A cat can see about six times as well as a human in starlight. Cats have a mirror-like layer in their eyes that makes them appear to glow when a light strikes them. This is usually seen at night.
- Ears:** Cup-shaped, erect and mobile, all of which helps pick up sounds.
- Mouth:** Contains 30 teeth and the tongue.
- Tongue:** Used for eating, lapping liquids, and grooming.
- Lips:** Fleshy part that covers mouth and teeth. They keep liquids and solids in the mouth. When snarling, the lips are pulled back to expose the teeth.
- Whiskers:** Long hairs extending from the lip and forehead area. Also known as vibrissae. From tip to tip, the whiskers usually measure a bit longer than the cat is wide. Rarely, unless chased or enticed, will a cat enter a hole or pipe too small for itself and get stuck, due to the whiskers. Some cats also have carpal hairs on the back of the front legs which are very sensitive to touch. They look like small whiskers.
- Jaw (lower):** A hinged bony structure that carries the lower teeth. It allows the cat to open its mouth.
- Jaw (upper):** Is attached to the skull and also supports the nasal (nostrils) passage.
- Cheek:** Fleshy part between the eye and the jaw. Sometimes referred to as the jowl.
- Neck:** Area between the head and forequarters. It can be turned in a greater arc than a human's. Cats can lick between their shoulders.
- Nape:** Just forward of the shoulder at the base of the neck. A mother cat picks up kittens here because the skin is loose and she can carry them without hurting them.
- Chest:** The front part of the body between the front legs and below the neck.
- Shoulder:** The bones and muscles that join the front leg to the body. They extend from the spine to the elbow.
- Elbow:** First joint below the body on the front leg.
- Foreleg:** Front leg.
- Wrist:** The joint below the elbow on the front leg.



- Metacarpals:** The bones between the wrist and the paws. Includes the dewclaw, the cat equivalent of a thumb.
- Toes (digits):** There are five toes on the front paws and four on the back. A cat walks on its toes; this is called "digitgrade." A polydactyl is a cat with more than the usual number of toes.
- Pad:** Sole of the foot. These are very sensitive and are used to feel texture, size, shape, and temperature, the same way we use our fingertips.
- Ribs:** Thirteen bones on each side connected to the spine on top and the sternum or breastbone below. These bones protect the lungs, heart, and other vital organs. Expansion of the rib cage by muscles draws air into the lungs.
- Back:** Extends from the shoulder to the hip.
- Loin:** The top line of the back between the rib cage and the hip.
- Hip:** The point at which the rear leg attaches to the body.
- Thigh:** The area of the hind leg between the hip and the knee.
- Knee:** Better known as the stifle, it is very similar to your knee and has a knee cap or patella.
- Tarsals:** Ankle bones or hock bones, located at the hock which is the joint below the knee (heel).
- Metatarsals:** Hind paw bones, foot bones.
- Phalanges:** Toe bones, also fingers.
- Belly:** Underpart of the cat, unprotected by bones.
- Rump:** Rounded muscle group from tail to shank.
- Shank:** Lower part of the rump where the muscles narrow between the knee and the heel (hock).
- Flank:** Area between the end of the rib cage and the thigh, along the side.
- Hindquarters:** From the hip back, including the hind legs and tail.
- Tail:** An extension of the spine, used for balance and as an emotion gauge.
- Spine:** From skull to end of tail, it is extremely flexible, enabling a cat to twist during a fall and land on its feet.
- Rectum:** At the end of the large intestine, where feces are excreted. Located under the tail.



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Fun Facts

Cats can see about six times better than people in starlight.

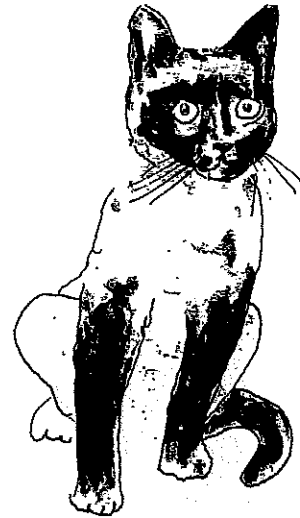
From tip to tip, cats' whiskers are usually longer than the cat is wide. This keeps cats from entering a hole or pipe that is too small.

Cats have five toes on the front paws and four on the back.

Cats walk on their toes.

A cat's spine is very flexible, so a cat can twist during a fall and land on its feet.





Resources

Books:

Siegal, Mordecai. 1997. *The Cornell Book of Cats, 2nd Edition*. Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University. Villard, New York.

Siegal, Mordecai. 2004. *The Cat Fancier's Association Complete Cat Book*. Harper Collins. New York.

Stephens, Gloria. 2001. *Legacy of the Cat—The Ultimate Illustrated Guide*. Chronicle Books. San Francisco.

Web sites:

Breed Associations:

CFA <http://www.cfainc.org>

ACFA <http://www.acfacats.com>

TICA <http://www.tica.org>

Pet Food Web sites:

<http://www.royalcanin.us/>

<http://www.purina.com>

<http://www.friskies.com>

<http://www.iams.com>

<http://www.hillspet.com>

You may check the last page of any of the 4-H CCS Cat Project Series for an extensive list of web sites.





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