



5 ways to protect your new cat

Not sure how to be the perfect cat parent? Here's help to make sure your cat is purring all the way into her senior years.



1 Schedule a neuter/spay day. Spaying or neutering doesn't just help with cat population control. It can also help minimize and prevent many serious health risks, if done while the pet is still young. In males, it reduces the tendency to roam and get into fights, which may lead to injuries. In both male and female cats, it eliminates the risk of some reproductive cancers, including uterine, ovarian, and testicular cancer, and it may reduce the risk of mammary cancer.



5 Get the diet right. If you

want your cat to live a long and healthy life, pay special attention to her diet. There are serious health risks associated with obesity. A nutritionally balanced diet designed for your cat's life stage, breed, and health status should provide her with all she needs. Cats are picky eaters, and exposing them to foods with different flavors, textures, and shapes early in life can make dietary changes later much easier. Discuss diet with your veterinarian to ensure your cat is getting the right nutrition for her age and breed.

Pro tip: Ask your veterinarian to calculate the calories your pet needs and then measure out the amount of your cat's food you should offer to prevent obesity.



2 Better start brushing.

Dental problems are one of the most common findings in cats of all ages. To help keep your cat's teeth healthy and pain-free, get your hands on appropriate toothbrushes (or alternatives) and special toothpaste for cats. (People toothpaste is not safe for pets.) Also have her teeth examined and professionally cleaned by your veterinarian to prevent or treat dental disease early. Your veterinary team can teach you to safely brush your cat's teeth and keep her teeth in tiptop shape for years to come.



3 Be a regular at the hospital.

More frequent visits are recommended for older cats, and it's also a good idea for younger cats to catch subtle changes in health and stay on top of any behavioral or attitudinal changes. The veterinarian will examine your pet and advise you about your cat's changing needs as she grows and ages.



4 Keep an eye on that cat.

Cats can be masters of disguise, which is why Tip # 3 is so important. Be sure to let your veterinarian know about changes in your cat's behavior or elimination, eating, and drinking habits. Also double-check the doses on your cat's preventive medications and make sure she's up to date on her vaccines.

Take steps to protect your wallet against unexpected costs and protect your savings in case of a pet accident or emergency. Many veterinary services are included in pet insurance and wellness plans—ask your veterinary team which plans they recommend.