



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 7, ISSUE 8 • AUGUST 2015 NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW KITTEN TO OTHER PETS

Wouldn't it be great if you could bring your new kitty home, introduce him or her to your other pets, and everyone would immediately get along? With some cats this scenario might be possible, but more typically bringing a new kitty home to meet resident pets can be a hair-raising experience—unless handled correctly.

When you bring your new kitty home, isolate him or her in a separate "safe room." This can be any room with a door that closes firmly that's not accessible to other pets. The room should have a litter box, water and food, plenty of toys, and a comfy pet bed. The confined space will help the kitty feel safe while adjusting to a new home. Separating your pets in this manner gives them all an opportunity to become familiar with each others' scents while safely separated by a door.

During the first week, the only interaction your new and resident kitties should have is by playing paws under the door. As they begin to acclimate to each other, they'll feel less threatened and more comfortable.

Your new and resident kitties should have no face-to-face interaction for the first week. During this time, watch to make sure your new kitty is eating and drinking well and using the litter box. If you see any signs of stress (which may include sneezing, coughing, or runny eyes), lack of appetite, or inappropriate elimination outside of the litter box, contact your veterinarian.

After your new kitty has been in the "safe room" for a week, introduce each cat to the other's smell. Consider brushing the kitties with the same brush to transmit their scents, or relocate bedding from the "safe

room" to other parts of the house (and vice-versa). Try feeding the kitties a special treat on both sides of the closed door, which will help them associate the smell of the other cat with a positive experience. You may also want to let your resident kitties visit the "safe room" while your new kitty is safely exploring another part of the house.

After a few days of introducing smells, it's time to try a face-to-face introduction. Put your new kitty in a carrier (to keep him or her protected) and let your resident cats into the "safe room." It's not uncommon during an initial meeting to see some hissing, growling, or posturing. If it looks like the interaction could lead to aggression, you'll need to do this controlled introduction (using the carrier) a few more times before letting your cats meet outside the carrier. It's important not to rush this process. The introductions should proceed at a pace that's comfortable for all of the kitties.

Once the cats seem to be more curious or alert than stressed, with no outward signs of aggression, try opening the carrier door. Closely monitor all interactions for the first several weeks. Initially, your new kitty should stay in the "safe room" when no one is home. Don't leave your cats unsupervised until you feel certain there won't be any aggressive behavior.

If interaction among the cats deteriorates versus improving, return your new kitty to the "safe room" and start the introduction process again. But this time, allow even more time for each step.

It's a good idea to introduce your new kitty to resident cats before introducing resident dogs. Often, the cat-to-cat introductions will be more stressful than cat-to-dog interactions. During these introductions, your dog should always be crated or on a leash.

Allow the kitty to approach the dog when he or she is comfortable. Introductions should be supervised and are best done during quiet times of the day.

Carefully watch the first contacts between your new kitty and dog. Let them sniff each other. If either animal displays aggressive or fearful behavior, separate them immediately. Then try the introduction again the next day, repeating the encounter several times under controlled circumstances until both animals are comfortable with each other and show no signs of aggression.

With some time and patience, these tips can help ensure that your new kitty will smoothly integrate into your family.

NATIONAL TAKE YOUR CAT TO THE VET DAY

Saturday, August 22 is National Take Your Cat to the Vet Day. This nationwide campaign was developed to raise awareness that cats need annual wellness examinations just as much as dogs do, and to educate cat owners about the importance of annual veterinary visits for their pets.

If your kitty is due (or overdue) for a wellness exam, we invite you to support this campaign by scheduling an appointment with one of our veterinarians (and don't miss our special offer below).

AUGUST SPECIAL OFFERS FOR OUR READERS

Through August 31, receive a **free blood pressure check** when you bring your kitty to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam. Please stop by our front desk to schedule your appointment.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our team members.

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