



Congratulations on Your New Family Member!

We at Maine Coon Adoptions want to ensure that you and your cat make a good start together. The handouts in this packet will help you on your way, and our website www.MaineCoonAdoptions.com, has useful information on other topics. Please contact us if you have any questions or worries; email elaineln@pacbell.net or call [510-710-9250](tel:510-710-9250).

Life Before Adoption

MCA rescues cats from many different situations, with the majority coming from high-kill shelters or from the streets. These cats are often in poor shape, and MCA provides extensive veterinary care to ensure they are healthy before being made available for adoption. This includes:

- A thorough physical examination at our vet
- Spay or neuter (if required)
- FVRCP and rabies vaccinations
- Treatment for fleas, worms, and common parasites
- Microchip and registration
- Tests for FIV, FeLV and heartworm
- Blood panel for all cats age 7 or older (this checks that bodily functions are all working well)
- Any veterinary treatment required, e.g. dental work, ultrasound, diagnostic testing, etc.

We supply full vet records when you adopt, and we are happy to talk to you or put you in contact with our vet if you have any questions.

Our kitties live in foster homes with dedicated volunteers who have opened their hearts to them. Some kitties have had such a hard time that they are slow to trust again, so they are given the gifts of time to heal, one-on-one attention, lots of love, and a safe environment to learn to be happy again.

Fixed and Chipped

In accordance with California state law, all MCA cats are spayed or neutered before adoption.

All MCA kitties are microchipped, and MCA will register the chip for you. We recommend that families get a collar with a name tag on it in case the cat should ever escape. A cat on the street could be feral or stray; a cat with a collar is a cat with a family.

Choosing a Cat Carrier



Cat carriers are not an item that your cat will use frequently, but choosing an appropriate carrier is very important. The carrier must keep the cat contained and protect her from potential threats in the outside world. You may be able to predict your cat's behavior, but the outside world is full of unpredictable and frightening forces: loud traffic, uncontrolled dogs, screaming kids, poor drivers, and more.

Based on our experience of thousands of vet visits, trips to adoption fairs, and cat transports, Maine Coon Adoptions recommends a sturdy hard plastic carrier to ensure your cat travels safely and securely.

Sharp Claws vs. Cardboard and Cloth

A scared cat is very strong and determined. Carriers with soft sides or mesh panels may give your pet a nice view and lots of fresh air, but a frightened cat can rip through mesh and fabric to escape. Maine Coon Adoptions has seen scared cats rip through the mesh of a very expensive soft-sided carrier in less than 10 seconds. Cardboard is also easily destroyed by claws and teeth, as illustrated.



Sturdy plastic carriers offer the best protection for your pet.



Feeling Safe Away From Home

Cats feel more secure if they are in a more enclosed carrier. While we may like the idea of providing a view to our cat, cats don't appreciate the view when they are out of their familiar territory.

Auto Safety

Cardboard carriers and soft-sided carriers will not protect the cat in a car during a sudden stop or accident. The passenger airbag can break an adult human's arm, and can easily crush cardboard and soft carriers.

Locked Up Tight

After putting your cat in the carrier, make sure all clips and latches are secured properly. Double check to make sure the door is latched completely.

Pictures represent common types of carriers and are not meant to specify particular brands or models.

Welcoming Your New Kitty Home

To this small being, your home is a strange territory, filled with unfamiliar smells, sounds, and objects

The bathroom is an ideal space for your kitty's first couple of days in its new home. From the cat's point of view, it's small and safe - not too many things to check out for potential danger. From your point of view, it has a limited number of places to look if a shy kitty decides to disappear.



A cat has a few basic needs

Make sure the cat's safe space has food, water, an ample litter box, a scratching post/box, a few toys to play with, and a nice warm place to sleep - oh, and yes, kitties love having a place to hide, so think about that when choosing a bed. Kitty condos are great, but a cardboard box or a paper bag makes a good kitty hideaway. Make sure you cut the handles off the bag!

You picked your kitty, but did the kitty pick you?

The most important task the first week is letting the kitty get to know YOU, not YOU getting to know the kitty. Go slow. Let the cat approach you - offer a hand to sniff before petting, pet before snuggling. And talk: cats understand more than you think.



Sure, the cat is part of your family now, but not all at once, please

Moving house is stressful, so let your new cat get comfortable before introducing the rest of the family. Let the new cat meet and greet other members of the family one at a time, in the cat's space, not yours. If there's another pet in the household, you'll need to use extra care in bringing them together. See the handout in your adoption packet on introducing a new kitty to a resident cat, If you have a resident dog, see the American Humane Society's guidelines about introducing your new cat to the dog. <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/dog-behavior/introducing-dogs-to-cats.html>

Maine Coon Adoptions is here for you

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions, comments, or even if you just want to share stories or cute photos! We have lots of experience with all sorts of cat issues, and we are happy to provide help and advice now, a year from now, or ten years from now. Contact us at: elaineln@pacbell.net or 510-710-9250.



You can post pictures and stories on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/MaineCoonAdoptions

What to Feed Kitty

Diet is very important for your cat's health. Feeding your feline friend a good quality food will help him stay in good shape physically and psychologically; a poor diet can cause problems such as diabetes, obesity, food allergies, irritable bowel syndrome, and asthma. There are three important elements to a healthy diet for your cat:

- High levels of meat
- Low levels of carbohydrates
- Plenty of water

Protein

Cats (and all members of the family felidae) are obligate carnivores, which means they depend on the nutrients in meat for survival. Cats cannot digest vegetable matter efficiently and plant proteins lack vital amino acids, such as taurine, that cats need in their diet.



In the wild, a cat's diet is composed mainly of meat, with very little carbohydrate content. Ideally, your indoor kitty's diet should match this as closely as possible, with high levels of protein, moderate fat, and low levels of carbohydrates.

Check the ingredient list when choosing cat food: the first ingredient should be a recognizable muscle meat, such as chicken, turkey, beef, or salmon. Meal and by-products (beaks, feet, feathers, bones, etc.) should be avoided, as they provide little nutritional value.

Carbohydrates

Many foods contain grains, such as corn or rice, or flour products; these ingredients are added by pet food manufacturers because they are a cheap way to bulk up the food. Grains cannot be digested properly by cats, and they are full of carbohydrates, to which cats can become addicted (just like humans!). Cats on food with a high carbohydrate content have a tendency to overeat and can become obese.

Some widely available brands of cat food that we recommend include EVO, Wellness, and Blue Buffalo. Read more on feline diets on www.catinfo.org

Water



Cats have a low thirst drive, which means they aren't naturally inclined to drink much. A diet composed entirely of dry food will make them dehydrated. Even short periods of dehydration can lead to problems such as urinary tract blockages, kidney stones, and bladder infections; over time, chronic kidney disease may develop. To ensure your kitty is getting enough water, feed her wet food and make sure that there is always fresh water available. A pet water fountain is a good way to encourage kitty to drink more.

How Much to Feed Kitty

Kittens require more food per pound of body weight to support their growth than do adult cats. Growing kittens may need to eat up to three times per day. Adult cats typically do well eating one or two times per day. Free feeding may work for kitties who show self-control, but is not a good idea for kitties who like to snack. It's a good idea to check the caloric content of your kitty's food. When in doubt, talk to your vet!

Establishing Good Litter Box Habits

Based on articles from the San Francisco SPCA

Location

The best location for litter boxes is a quiet, private place where the cat will not be disturbed by people or other pets. Noisy areas near washing machines, furnaces or under stairs may frighten the cat away from the box. Never place the litter box close to food and water dishes. If you live in a multi-story house, it is best to have a box on each level.



Cleaning the box

Litter boxes must be kept consistently clean by scooping daily. The single most common reason for a cat's refusal to use a litter box is because the box is dirty—no one likes a dirty bathroom. Clumping litter should be scooped daily, and the litter boxes washed weekly. Non-clumping litter should be scooped daily and the box emptied and washed every other day.

Type of litter

Most cats prefer fine-grained litters, presumably because they have a softer feel. The new clumping litters are usually finer grained than the typical clay litter. Pellet-type litters, scented litters, or those made from citrus peels are not recommended. Once you find a litter your cat likes, don't change types or brands. Non-clumping litters are safest for kittens under 4 months.

Depth of litter

Cats like to have sufficient litter to scrape and cover their waste, but they do not necessarily want to sink into several inches of litter. Most domestic cats don't like litter more than about 2 inches deep. In fact, some cats, particularly some long-haired cats, may actually prefer less litter and a smooth, slick surface such as the bottom of the box.

Number of boxes

A good guideline is to have at least as many boxes as you have cats. Some cats prefer to urinate in one box and defecate in another and some will refuse to use a box that another cat has already soiled. Many cats dislike covered boxes because they make it difficult to maneuver inside and easier for rival cats to ambush the user as he exits. Larger cats will need a larger box.



Kittens

Kittens have an innate predisposition to use loose material as their litter, but they may also choose other locations. Limit the kitten's territory until they learn that the litter box is the only acceptable place for elimination. Just as with small children, they should not be expected to have to travel very far to find their toilet areas. Praise and rewards will help to speed the process.

If problems develop

If your cat stops using the litter box your first call should always be to your veterinarian. Many medical conditions can cause a change in litter box habits and these possibilities must be considered first. If your veterinarian determines your cat is healthy, the cause may be behavioral. Most litter box behavior problems can be resolved using behavior modification techniques. Punishment is NOT the answer. Have an enzymatic cleaner handy to help eliminate the odor. For more assistance, contact an animal behavior professional who is knowledgeable about and experienced in working with cats.

Scratching

Scratching serves many purposes in cats: sharpening claws, stress relief, marking territory, and more. It would be impossible to stop a cat from scratching, but cats can be trained to use a scratching post or pad.

Some cats prefer to scratch a post; others prefer a horizontal scratching pad; most cats will scratch either. Vertical posts should be tall and sturdy enough for the cat to stretch out and lean against without the post falling over.

Sisal (rope) scratchers are ideal as they are hardwearing; cardboard scratchers are also good as they are cheap and widely available. Carpet-covered scratchers can encourage the cat to scratch carpeting as well as their scratching post.



Fingers aren't toys!

It may be tempting to wiggle your fingers for the kitten to play with, but remember, that little kitten will grow into a big cat, and those tiny teeth and claws will get a lot bigger and more painful! Teach your kitty that toys are for playing with and fingers are for petting and treats.

Scratching problems?

You can stop inappropriate scratching by covering at-risk areas with foil, double-sided tape, or blown-up balloons. Discipline inappropriate scratching with a squirt from a spray water bottle and praise appropriate scratching with attention and treats.

Clipping claws

Keep kitty's claws in check by clipping the tips when they get too long. Most cats will let you trim their claws; many pet stores and vets also offer a claw-trimming service.

Declawing

Declawing is the feline equivalent of removing the upper joint of the fingers (this includes Laser declawing, which is the same brutal operation performed using lasers). The operation frequently results in behavioral changes in the kitty - particularly an increase in biting - and increased stress levels, as well as the possibility of physical deformities and illness from a botched operation. While Maine Coon Adoptions rescues and adopts out declawed cats, adopters must not declaw an intact cat. Please contact MCA if you are having issues with scratching; we are happy to offer help and advice.

Welcome to the Rescue Community

In adopting a rescue cat, you have joined a community of animal lovers who believe in giving homeless, abused, and abandoned kitties a second chance at love.

Rescue Realities

- Because the kitties we rescue mostly come from high-kill shelters, they often have health concerns that have to be dealt with before they can be adopted.
- 90% of our income goes to vet bills and supplies such as microchips and medication. The vet exam, vaccinations, testing, parasite treatment and microchip that every cat receives add up to \$120 per cat, and that is before any spay/neuter or additional tests or treatment.
- Adoption fees cover only a fraction of the cost of veterinary care for our rescued kitties. Typically, we have to raise several hundred dollars per kitty on average to cover the cost of rescuing the cats we adopt out in a year.



Take Marilyn Monroe (left). In poor shape, she needed a number of tests (ultrasound, thyroid, full blood panel, etc.) to make sure she could be restored to health. Total cost for her rescue, minus adoption fee = \$1,605.

Then there's Sonoma (right). He needed \$1,000 worth of dental work, among other things, before he was adoptable. Total cost, minus adoption fee = \$1,426.



- \$10 pays for one microchip
- \$20 pays for one course of antibiotics
- \$40 pays for one day in the vet hospital
- \$150 pays for a senior blood panel test

Can you provide an extra helping of love for kitties who haven't yet been as lucky as the kitty you are taking home today?

PET Rescue gratefully acknowledges your tax deductible gift of \$_____

We are dependent on generous donors like you to keep rescuing homeless and abandoned kitties. It's truly people like you who inspire us and make us feel that kitty rescue puts us in touch with the greatest, most generous folks around.

Maine Coon Adoptions is the adoption division of Preventing Euthanasia Through Rescue (PET Rescue), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Tax ID number 27-0225418.

Volunteer



Why volunteer?

Maine Coon Adoptions is an all volunteer non-profit cat rescue organization which has saved over 2000 kitties since 2004. Our volunteers provide essential support to help homeless kitties find loving homes.

Volunteer opportunities

Adoption Fairs

Help prospective adopters meet our kitties in Oakland & Pleasant Hill

Adoption Counselors

Interview adoption applicants by phone & match potential adopters with kitties



Foster Friends

Help give a kitty confidence and love to get it ready for adoption by caring for it in your home

Administrative Support

Help keep kitty records up to date

Kitty Cuddler

Socialize shy kitties by petting them and playing with them

Kitty Chauffeur

Pick up and drop off kitties at adoption fairs and other

How to volunteer

Contact Elaine at elaineln@pacbell.net or 510-710-9250.

Check out our website for more information at www.MaineCoonAdoptions.com



Did you have a positive experience with us?
We love getting reviews on Yelp. Just go to:
www.yelp.com/biz/Maine-Coon-Adoptions-Oakland