

Things to Consider Before Getting a Cat

PVMA FACT SHEET

Are you considering adding a new member to the family? Getting a kitten can be a great addition and adopting a shelter cat can be extremely rewarding, but have you thought about everything getting a new pet will entail? Anyone who has visited a shelter has seen the alarming number of animals waiting for a new home, but not all of them were strays. Some of those animals came from a home and had to be given up for a variety of reasons. So before you commit to a new furry friend, there are a few things to consider.

What kind of cat do you want?

Not all cats are created equal. While you might prefer the look of one type or another, would you mind having to groom your cat everyday and vacuum more frequently? All cats shed, but shedding from medium and long-haired cats will be a lot more noticeable. Not vacuuming frequently could lead to a hairy situation! While cats do groom themselves, medium and long-haired cats should be groomed by their owners as well to prevent excessive hairballs and matted fur. It also helps to clean the fur of anything that might be trapped like dirt and dust.

Kitten, Cat, or Senior?

No one can deny the allure of a kitten, but they do require more hands on work. Kittens shouldn't be left alone all day while you work. They require regular feeding and supervised litter training. If you have other cats, time they spend together should be monitored for bullying or rough play which could cause injuries. Veterinary care is also important to ensure that vaccinations are given and overall health is monitored.

Adult cats are better if you have a busy lifestyle and don't require as much constant attention and monitoring. They are also active and probably don't spend as much time sleeping as you'd think, so make sure there are toys, scratching posts, or other activities to keep them occupied in positive ways instead of getting into trouble.

Senior cats are very loving but have less effective immune systems and are more susceptible to disease and illness. If your senior cat show signs of changing behavior like not eating, excessive thirst, or dramatic weight loss or gain, make sure it's examined by your veterinarian to either rule out or treat immediately any health concerns.

Who Else Will the Cat Affect?

If you already have pets, particularly dogs or anything else that's not a cat, consider the effect that bringing a cat into the home might have. If possible, take your existing pet to meet the new cat before committing to it and see how the meeting goes. If



they fight like cats and dogs, you might want to think twice about whether the relationship could improve once you bring the cat home.

Consider the Cost

Keeping a healthy, happy pet comes at a price. Vaccinations, spaying or neutering, microchips, and annual veterinary check-ups are a must. Plus there is food, treats, toys, and bedding to pay for. As with any pet, an illness, injury, or disease could also require specialized food or additional treatments.

Keeping a Clean Litter Box

Cats often prefer a certain location for their litter tray and may even have a preference for a certain type of litter. In order to avoid accidents you must keep the litter tray as clean as possible and put it in an area with some privacy. Always put a separate tray down for each cat – not too close together. Think carefully about the surface it is on as cats often like to scratch the area around the litter tray after they have used it and may not be able to scratch a cold cement floor.

Good with children?

It's important to consider temperament when bringing a cat into a household with children or if children visit on a regular basis. Confident, friendly cats, as a rule, are the ideal choice to live in a household with children as they tend to be relaxed, happy to play, and enjoy being stroked. A shy cat, on the other hand, would probably feel threatened by the presence of active and playful children and would be happier in a quiet, adult household. It's also important to teach your children the need to respect the cat's independence and to teach them to be good pet owners.

