



# COLORADO FELINE FOSTER RESCUE ADOPTION GUIDE

We sincerely appreciate that you have chosen to partner with Colorado Feline Foster Rescue to provide a home to your newest family member. This guide contains important information and helpful tips to ensure that you and your feline can form a long, healthy relationship together.

**1. First... take time to settle in and get to know one another!** Remember that the kitten/cat you have adopted has likely been through a lot, and is coming out of a comfortable foster home into your new home. He/she may be a bit timid or shy at first, and it could take him/her some time to feel comfortable and secure around his/her forever family.

## 2. CAT SCRATCHING SOLUTIONS

Scratching is a healthy and natural feline behavior that should not be avoided by declawing, but rather redirected to more appropriate surfaces. Every cat has their own preference for scratching, so you may need to try a few different options to ensure the best fit for you and your new family member.

### A. Recommended Options

- Scratching posts with sisal or rope
- Place the post near your cat's food or bed - they prefer to scratch after eating or napping
- To attract your cat to his or her post, hang toys from the top of the post or rub it with catnip
- We recommend a number of horizontal cardboard scratchers and tall vertical towers

### B. Trim nails Regularly

The longer the nail, the sharper it is. Nail trimming is important to prevent the nails from curling into the paw pads.

- Trimming should be done every 2-3 weeks
- Most cats do not tolerate nail trims. You can condition your cat to tolerate nail trimming by playing with their feet when you are holding them
- If you do not feel comfortable trimming the nails yourself or if your cat is too difficult to handle, your vet or a local groomer would be happy to assist for a reasonable fee
- Trimming a cat's nails is sometimes a two-person job, one to hold your cat and one to trim the nails

#### *How to Trim Nails:*

- To trim, apply pressure to the middle of the paw pad, that will expose the nail
- When trimming, only cut the clear, hooked part of the nail
- Be sure to avoid the pink area, called a "quick"
- Trim all claws, including the "dew claw", also known as a "thumb nail"

### C. Alternatives

- **Soft Paws** are plastic nail covers that can be applied to a cat's claw so he or she can continue to use their claws naturally without causing damage. Soft Paws are available in a variety of colors and can be easily purchased at your veterinarian office, pet supply stores, or Amazon. Connect your Amazon account to CFFR via Amazon Smile to give back to the rescue!

### D. Biting and Scratching

Cats, especially kittens, become overly excited during playtime with humans. This may cause biting or scratching, as if they are playing with another cat. You can avoid this by providing your cat with an appropriate way to spend his or her energy and to act out their predatory nature. Cats who are given active and regular playtimes are less likely to scratch and bite.

- When playtime results in scratches or bites, end playtime immediately and walk away or give them a substitute

- Your cat will not understand this the first few times it happens, but with repetition they will learn that playtime only continues when they behave appropriately
- Teach your cat the difference between hands and toys
- DO NOT engage in rough play with your hands or fingers as “prey”
- Feather wands are best for this as they put a safe and healthy distance between the toy and your hand

### 3. THE LITTER BOX

Cats do not need to learn how to use a litter box – it comes naturally. They simply prefer that their litter box is clean, is in a consistent location and has the type of litter and box setup that they prefer.

***If you repeatedly experience litter box issues, the first step is a visit your local veterinarian to rule out potential medical issues. More often than not, this will be the cause of litter box issues.***

#### A. Cleanliness

- Clean litter boxes daily by scooping debris
- Fully clean and scrub the litter box every few weeks and/or when it becomes heavily soiled

#### B. Location & Distance

- Keep the litter box in an area that is convenient and private for your cat, such as a closet or a bathroom
- If your cat cannot navigate stairs, he or she will not remember where the box is if it takes too long to get there
- If your cat does not like loud noises, placing the box near a furnace or appliances may be startling and uncomfortable

#### C. Types of Litter

- CFFR adult cats use clay litter, both clumping and non-clumping
- If you would like to change litter types, proceed with caution!
  - Start by mixing 1/8 of the new litter with 7/8 of the old litter
  - Each time you change the litter, add more **new** litter (2/8 to 6/8, 3/8 to 5/8, 1/2 and 1/2)
  - If at any time your cat stops using the litter box, mix in more of the old litter
- To prevent litter box problems, have one litter box per cat in the household plus one additional box
- Place litter boxes in different areas. If you have a multi-level home, have a litter box on each level.
- Some cats prefer covered litter boxes, while others refuse to use a covered litter box
  - Covered litter boxes may hold the smell inside them
  - Ensure the litter box is large enough for your cat to turn around, dig, and bury
  - If you have multiple cats, understand that covered litter boxes do allow cats to trap other cats inside

### 4. FOOD

At CFFR, our adult cats enjoy **Hill’s Science Diet wet and dry** food and our kittens enjoy **Royal Canin Mother/babycat or Kitten wet and dry** food, depending on their age. If you prefer to feed your cat a different brand, it is best to introduce the change very slowly to reduce potential issues, including vomiting and diarrhea. We recommend kittens stay on Royal Canin Mother/Babycat food until 4 months of age, and then be transitioned to KITTEN food until they are a year old.

#### **How to transition your kitten/cat to a new food:**

Begin with a mix of 25% of your cat's new food and 75% of the old food. Feed this for about two to three days. Slowly increase the amount of new food so that you have a 50/50 mix for your cat to enjoy. After two to three days of half and half, you can move on to a mix of 75% of the new food and 25% of the old diet. After a few days of that, you can safely transition your kitten/cat to the new food entirely. Note: If you see that the new diet is causing soft stools, back up and take the transition more slowly.

### 5. COMMON FELINE ILLNESS

Cats are more likely to become ill in a stressful environment, which can include becoming welcomed to a new home and meeting new people. Please contact your local veterinarian for additional information if your cat experiences any of the below symptoms related to common feline illnesses.

- **Upper Respiratory Infection (URI):** similar to a common cold, including symptoms of sneezing, nasal discharge, eye discharge, and wheezing. Contact your local veterinarian if your cat is behaving in lethargic manner, not eating or having trouble breathing.
- **Diarrhea:** Cats have sensitive stomachs and may experience an upset stomach if they are stressed or have abrupt food changes. Contact your local veterinarian if your cat has diarrhea that does not resolve in 2 - 3 days or immediately if you see blood in the stool.
- **Urinary Tract Infection UTI:** Cats are unique to humans and can develop urinary tract issues directly from stress related factors. Contact your local veterinarian if your cat is straining in the box, not using the box, making frequent trips to the box, or acting as if he or she is in pain while using the litter box.
- **Fungal Infection:** If your cat has scaly and/or bald patches please contact CFFR and/or your local veterinarian.

## 6. INTRODUCING A NEW CAT TO YOUR HOME

When introducing your cat to their new home, set up a safe space. This can be a bathroom or any small room where your new cat can adjust to his or her new surroundings without feeling overwhelmed. Be sure and keep the toilet seat down!

- Ensure the room has limited places for your cat to hide and explore at their own pace
- Place food, water, litter box, toys and scratching post in the room
- Keeping them in the room for approximately one week or until they are ready to explore
- Spend plenty of time with your cat in their safe room
- Using Feliway or other synthetic pheromones may help during this time. Do not use essential oils

### A. Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Cat

Adding a new cat to your household is exciting, but it can also lead to turmoil, especially if you already have a cat that's unsure of the new family member. While the first few days in your home can be ones of high stress, knowing how to socialize your cat with the new one can make the transition go smoother. CONTROL as much as you can of their initial encounters.

- **Limit Expectations:** You can expect it to take anywhere from 8-12 months for cats to become friends. And while some cats will develop close bonds, others never grow close. Still, they can learn to tolerate each other.
- **Maintain Separation:** In the early stages, each cat should have his own space, scratching post, litter box, bed and food and water bowls. Cats think territorially, and this keeps them from fighting over resources.
- **Introduce by Smell:** Start by letting the two cats hear and smell each other, but don't let them see or touch. Cat behaviorists from Best Friends Animal Society recommend that you rub the cats' cheeks separately with a towel to collect cat pheromones. You can then rub the other cat's cheeks with the towel after and introduce both to the new scent. In this way, the cats will accustom themselves to the other's scent without feeling threatened. The pheromones relieve anxiety, and they provide information about the other cat.
- **Encourage Interaction Through a Door:** Place both cats' food bowls on the opposite side of the door to the safe room you have setup for your new cat
- **Slightly Open the Door:** after one week, slightly open the door of the safe room so the cats can see each other, but cannot fully put their head through the door. Hissing and growling is normal, but if one tries to swat the other close the door. Do this a few times a day
- **Allow Interaction:** once the cats can see one other through the cracked door and not hiss or growl, it is time to let them interact. Cats will hiss at each other, which is natural. If either begins to swat or bite, break up the interaction quickly using a heavy towel (not your bare hands). Return the new cat to their safe room for 1-2 days, then repeat the process. You should never yell at or punish the cats for their behavior, but instead spend time reassuring them. Let the resident cat dictate the pace of introductions.

### B. Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Dog

- **Maintain Separation:** when you bring your new cat home, set up a safe room with the directions above. Prevent your resident dog from entering the safe room during the initial adjustment period.
- **Introduce by Smell:** repeat the same towel procedure as outlined above.
- **Encourage Interaction Through a Door:** place both the dog and cat's food by the door to the safe room you have setup for your new cat
- **Open the Door:** after your new cat has been in her safe room for about one week, leash your dog and crack the door while keeping a tight hold on the leash. Once your cat comes out of the room, allow them to sniff each other. Make sure

your cat has a place to escape if he or she is stressed during this time. Hissing and growling is normal until the two get comfortable with each other, which can take up to a month.

- If either cat or dog swats or bites, return the cat to their safe room and try again in a day or two.
- **Increase their time together:** Continually increase the amount and length of time of interactions. After numerous interactions, the next step is to allow the cat full reign of the house while you are home. During this time make, ensure your dog is leashed to maintain control. Until you can fully trust them together, you should always make sure the new cat and dog separated when you are not home or are unable to supervise their interactions.

## HOW TO HELP COLORADO FELINE FOSTER RESCUE

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- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColoradoFelineFosterRescue>



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- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/coloradofelinefosterrescue/> (Instagram doesn't allow reviews - we'd be grateful if you follow us and share with others!)
- Google: <https://goo.gl/maps/g9N41W6P7oanz3dV6>
- NextDoor: <https://nextdoor.com/pages/colorado-feline-foster-rescue-morrison-co/recommend/>

- **Donate:**

Donations, both monetary and non-monetary (food, carriers, toys, beds, scratching posts) are always appreciated! Please visit our website to donate money, or view our wish list for most needed items: <https://www.coloradofelinefosterrescue.org/donate>

- **Volunteer:**

We would not be able to save all the lives we do without the help of our volunteers. Please visit our website and submit a volunteer application: <https://www.coloradofelinefosterrescue.org/volunteer>

- **Become a Foster Parent:**

Help us save more lives by temporarily fostering for us. Please visit our website and submit a foster application: <https://www.coloradofelinefosterrescue.org/apply-to-foster>