

CAT-PROOFING

Cats are naturally curious and love to investigate their surroundings. Taking a few simple precautions can help your feline safely settle into their new home.

Toxic to cats: Lilies, tulips, aloe vera, snake plants, daffodils, onions, chives, garlic, grapes, raisins, chocolate, alcohol, caffeine, dairy products, coconut, xylitol, Ibuprofen, Vitamin D3, flea products for dogs, cleaning products, medications and essential oils. **Hazards:** string, yarn, hair ties and rubber bands.

COMMON CAT MISCONCEPTIONS

"Spray bottles teach cats right from wrong"

Cats don't respond to punishment. Yelling, spraying water or scolding may stop a behavior in the moment, but it often teaches your cat to fear or avoid you instead. Positive redirection and rewarding good behavior is more effective.

"Cats don't need playtime"

Cats are highly intelligent animals that need daily mental and physical enrichment. Regular interactive play helps build confidence, reduce stress and prevent unwanted behaviors.

"Declawing a cat is harmless"

Declawing a cat is equivalent to amputating a human finger at the first knuckle. This procedure can lead to chronic pain, nerve damage, arthritis, difficulty walking or balancing, and behavioral problems.

"Cats love milk, right?"

While kittens can digest their mother's milk, most adult cats are lactose intolerant. That saucer of milk may be more likely to cause an upset stomach than a happy cat.

KEEPING YOUR CAT HEALTHY

Just like people, cats benefit from **regular wellness exams**. Cats are experts at hiding pain and illness, which means underlying health concerns can sometimes go unnoticed until they become more serious. Annual veterinary visits help ensure your cat stays happy and healthy throughout their life.

Between checkups, pay attention to any changes in your cat's appetite, litter box habits, grooming, mobility, energy level, body language or behavior. Even subtle changes can be an early sign that something isn't quite right.



To help make veterinary visits less stressful, **leave your cat's carrier out at home** with a favorite blanket, treats or toys inside. Allowing your cat to explore and relax in the carrier throughout the year can help it become a familiar, safe space rather than something associated only with trips to the veterinarian.