



AM I READY TO ADOPT A CAT?

We are thrilled that you are considering adopting a cat from Cats of Salt Spring Rescue Society! Before moving forward with the application process, here are some important points to consider and discuss with all members of your household:

Adopting a cat is a long-term commitment

Cats typically live for 15 to 20 years. Cats are living creatures and are not toys. Is your family in a position to make a long-term commitment at this time? Daily chores include playing and spending time with the cat, cleaning the litter box and providing meals. All members of the household, but especially the adults, need to be ready to commit to caring for a cat for its entire lifetime!

Does anyone in my household have allergies to cats?

Sadly, many people adopt kittens or cats only to discover that a member of their family or a relative or a close friend has a serious cat allergy. This is an upsetting situation for both the adopted pet and the adoptive family. Please make sure that everyone in your household has been assessed for cat allergies prior to applying to adopt.

Planning a big move in the next few years?

Unfortunately, moving is a very common reason that cats are either abandoned or surrendered to an animal shelter. Finding housing where cats are permitted can also be challenging. If you are not in a situation where your life plans align with making a long-term commitment to a pet, perhaps you might want to apply to foster a cat. Please ask us for information about fostering if this seems like a better fit for your family situation.

The costs of owning a cat

Pet ownership is an expensive undertaking. The costs to consider include food, vetting (see below) and litter. Other costs include flea and tick preventative medications, which are required on a year-round basis if your cat has outdoor access or comes in contact with other animals who have outdoor access (such as a dog).

Why does my cat have to see the veterinarian?

In the same way that a person sees a doctor for an annual physical, cats require an annual visit to a veterinarian for a wellness check. Your cat's vet will update any necessary vaccines (such as FVRCP and Rabies). A complete physical examination will be performed to check for any other medical issues. Cats can't tell us when they have a cavity or an abscessed tooth, or a pain in their abdomen: they rely on us to care for them. ***Adopters need to commit to taking their new cat to the veterinarian for an annual exam as part of being a responsible pet owner.***

If your cat does go outdoors, it will need to be treated with flea and tick preventative medications (which can be applied either monthly or quarterly, depending on the product used). Outdoor cats also need to be treated regularly for parasites (dewormed). If your outdoor cat is not cared for properly, its health may deteriorate and it may bring fleas or other parasites into your home to other animals and/or family members. In addition, many outdoor cats will require emergency treatment from injuries sustained from fights with other animals or from accidents, such as being hit by a car. The cost of emergency vetting can easily be \$2,000 to \$5,000 per incident.

Indoor vs Outdoor

Statistics show that indoor cats lead longer, healthier lives than outdoor cats. Indoor cats live on average 10–15 years, while outdoor cats live only 2–5 years on average. **If you choose to let your cat outside, please know that you are *significantly* shortening its life expectancy. In addition, you are likely to incur significantly higher veterinarian expenses over the life of your cat.**

Here are just some of the dangers faced by outdoor cats:

1. Being hit by vehicles.
2. Being injured by attacks from other cats, other animals, or people with cruel intentions.
3. Poisoning by toxins, such as antifreeze or rat bait.
4. Contracting deadly infectious diseases from other animals.
5. Contracting parasites, such as fleas or ticks (and the diseases they carry).

There are many ways to safely enhance the life of a cat while keeping it safely indoors. **Please make a commitment to keep your cat safe and allow it to live a long and healthy life by keeping it indoors!**

Am I prepared to work through behavioural challenges?

Bringing home a cat or kitten is exciting! Adoptive families need to be realistic about the length of time that it takes an adopted animal to adjust to its new home. Going slowly and being patient through the first few months can really set the stage for a long and happy relationship with your new cat.

Behavioral issues such as scratching of furniture or urinating outside the litter box can occur. In many cases, these challenges can be managed by changes in routine (e.g. moving the litter box to a different location, or clipping the cat's claws) or by addressing underlying causes (such as a urinary tract infection). Part of pet ownership involves working through these difficult situations. We are very happy to work with our adopters to find solutions to challenges, which may arise. Chances are, we've dealt with similar situations before, so please don't hesitate to reach out for help!