



# Post-adoption & Settling Advice: Cats



Rescue. Protect. Lead.



Congratulations on adopting your cat! We hope you both settle well but we know that this time can sometimes be a bit stressful for both you and your new companion. To help make this transition as smooth as possible, here is some advice to help you and your new cat:

- Cats feel the most safe in a familiar environment which is why travelling can be quite stressful for them. To make things less stressful, we recommend using Feliway spray on the blanket in their carrier. When you pick up your cat, make sure you take them straight home and keep them in their carrier until they are in their designated safe place.
- Once you are home, place the carrier down in the designated safe space and open the door. Some cats may not immediately come out of the carrier and that's normal. Many cats will be worried about their new unfamiliar surroundings so will need time to feel safe and relaxed to come out and explore. It's important to not coax them out or force them out before they are ready.
- Every cat is unique and may respond differently – some cats will come out immediately whilst others will take much longer to explore their safe place. It's important to let them take their own time to process their new surroundings. If you spend time in their room or near their allocated safe space, do not try to force interaction or progress. By being patient and allowing them to suss out their new home on their terms will make them feel more comfortable and confident.
- Your cat should have free access to their safe space. If they want to go there, you shouldn't disturb them, this is particularly important to stress with any children who may be eager to play with your cat. No interaction should be forced – allow them to approach you if they would like to, but otherwise allow them time and space to suss out their new surroundings.
- Once your cat is comfortable and eating normally, being quite interactive and exploring their new surroundings, you can open more of your home to them, bit by bit. It may take a few days before your cat is ready to explore beyond their original safe space, but some cats may take longer.
- Remember, your cat may try to escape until they've settled down, so in the first few weeks take extra care when opening doors or windows.
- If your cat will be able to go outside, they must be neutered and vaccinated before they are allowed outside. We also advise waiting at least 3 weeks before giving them outside access so they can really settle into the home first. We suggest letting them outside for the first time before you normally feed them and go outside with them. Once they've had a little exploration, you can call them back in for their food.

**In the first week, the main priority is getting your cat settled into a new routine and comfortable with household members. Whilst they settle in, be mindful of the following questions:**

- 1 Are they eating OK?
- 2 Are their toileting habits normal?
- 3 Are they sleeping enough?
- 4 What do they like and dislike?



- Remember that it can take weeks and usually months for a cat to fully settle in its new home. It's always better to take things too slowly than too quickly to help build their confidence.
- As you've adopted through the SSPCA, you get 4 weeks free PetPlan insurance. However, we strongly advise you to maintain a pet insurance plan for both physical health and any future behaviour support your cat may need.
- We never advocate punishing your cat. If you need behavioural support for your cat, we advise looking at the Animal Behaviour Training Council Practitioner register. This is covered by most pet insurance so make sure you check before you take out your policy.

## Help - my rescue cat has diarrhoea!

**Diarrhoea can be very common, especially in rescue cats, and although it can be alarming, most cases are very short-lived, last no more than a few days, and often treatable at home, without the need to visit a vet.**

### THE 3 MOST COMMON REASONS FOR A DOG TO HAVE DIARRHOEA ARE:

- 1 Stress or anxiety: Changes of environment can be stressful for some rescue animals. Help your cat adjust and reduce this stress by following our settling advice.
- 2 A change in diet or treats: Try to continue the same type, amount and pattern of feeding that your cat has been used to in our care and avoid giving any treats unless they are used to them. Any change of diet should be done gradually over 5 days to give your animal's gut time to adapt, and make sure to not overdo portion sizes or give too many treats.
- 3 Eating food scraps or rubbish: Some cats are more prone to scavenging than others. Avoid feeding your cat table scraps and make sure to keep plates of food out of reach.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY RESCUE CAT DEVELOPS DIARRHOEA?

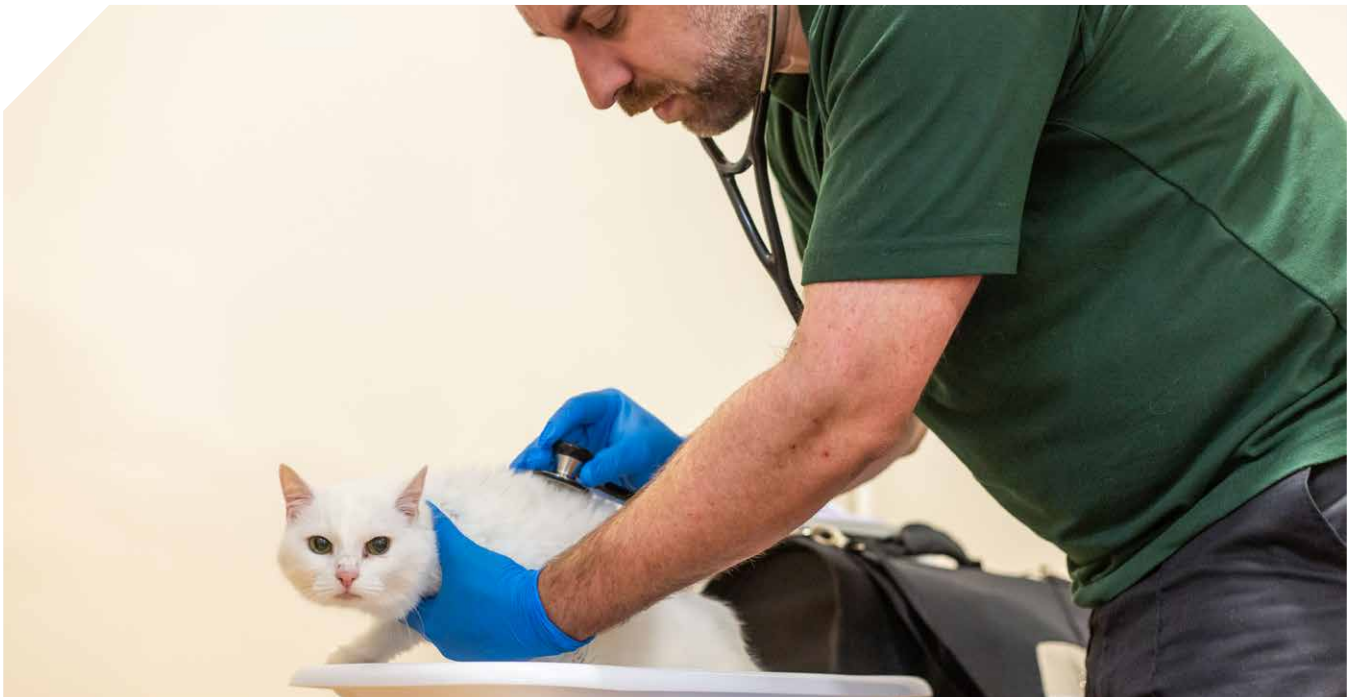
Give their gut a rest, and fast them for between 12 and 24 hours. This means no food at all with just water to drink - and avoid milk as this will cause diarrhoea. Gradually reintroduce food in smaller portions than normal until you are sure the diarrhoea has stopped.

**NEVER GIVE YOUR ANIMAL ANY HUMAN  
DIARRHOEA REMEDIES,  
AS THESE CAN BE POISONOUS.**





## When should I contact the vet if my cat has diarrhoea?



IF YOUR CAT DISPLAYS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS, YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR VET IMMEDIATELY FOR ADVICE:

- Blood in their faeces as this can be a sign of more serious infection
- Straining to pass small amounts of watery diarrhoea
- Vomiting as well as diarrhoea
- Abnormal drooling of saliva as this indicates nausea
- Completely off food for more than 8 hours
- Weakness, tiredness, sleeping more than usual or hiding away
- Signs of dehydration, such as sunken eyes, very dry or tacky gums
- Obvious signs of abdominal pain, such as hunched appearance or crying if you touch their abdomen
- If they are very old or very young or, also suffering another illness that may compromise their ability to fight infection

Always contact your vet if you become concerned that your animal is unwell or if they do not respond to the basic treatment for diarrhoea as suggested above.

**If you need any further advice on how to take care of your cat or want to find more information, please refer to your cat care guide or visit our website:**

[www.scottishspca.org/advice/cats/](http://www.scottishspca.org/advice/cats/)