



Windows – A cat intent on catching a passing bug or bird can break through a screen that does not have very sturdy mesh and/or is not very securely attached. It is safest not to open windows more than about two inches – the cat must not be able to get her head through the opening.

Balconies – Cats should *never* be on a balcony that is not completely enclosed. Cats like to walk on railings, and they like to go after bugs and birds. They can easily go over the railing.

Bags – Put away bags with handles. The cat can become caught in the handle and might suffocate if the handle is around her neck. Cats love paper bags, so remove the handles before you let your cat play in one. Do not let your cat play in plastic bags.

Rubber bands, strings, needles, tinsel, dental floss – These and other small objects that the cat might swallow could be fatal, so put them away.

Plants – Some common plants are poisonous to cats. Visit the [ASPCA's Toxic Plant page](#) for a list of toxic and non-toxic plants.

People Foods – Some foods that are fine for us can make your cat sick or cause death. Visit the [ASPCA's People Foods to Avoid page](#) for a list.



Human Medications – Do not leave medications where your cat can get them. Do not give your cat any human medication unless instructed by your veterinarian.

Insecticides and Rodenticides – Do not leave these items where your cat might ingest them. Remember that cats lick their fur, so your cat could ingest them if they get on her fur.

Mothballs are very toxic to cats.

Household cleaners and other hazardous chemicals – Cleaning products, anti-freeze, disinfectants, etc. can be fatal if ingested. Keep these items stored safely where your cat cannot get them. Please always read the instructions written on the product before use. If certain cleaners need to sit for a bit to be effective, surfaces can be rinsed afterwards to avoid burning tender paws. Please do not disinfect cat toys or chews with Lysol, which is toxic to companion animals. Instead wash such items with gentle washing detergent or diluted Dawn dish detergent and water. Under no circumstances should you use bleach or bleach-containing cleaning products on your cats or on objects they play with, use or chew.

Bathing – Cats don't require baths, but if bathing becomes a necessity, *only* use products intended for bathing companion animals like cats & dogs. Other cleaners can hurt them or cause eye damage.

Litter – For kittens under 4-5 months old, NO clumping litter should be used. Use pine or unscented, non-clumping clay litter. Clumping litter can cause blockage in the intestines for young cats and for young kittens clumping litter can be deadly.

Collars – A collar can be quite harmful if a limb gets stuck in it or if it gets caught on furniture. Indoor cats do not need collars and should not wear them when unattended.

Essential Oils – Essential oils can pose a toxic risk to household pets, especially to cats. For a more detailed explanation, see the [Essential Oils and Cats Handout](#) in this link.

Himalayan Salt lamps and other salt lamps are also toxic to cats. Read [this link](#) for details.

Candles – Cats can knock over a lit candle, starting a fire.

Venetian Blinds – Cats can become tangled in the cords.

Toilets – Keep the lid closed and avoid using an automatic toilet cleaner system.



Stove knobs – Use baby guards if your stove knobs are easy to turn. A cat jumping onto the stove can accidentally turn on the heat/flame if the knobs turn easily.

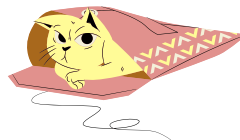
Electrical cords should be safe and secure, and not dangling.

Fireplaces should have a secure screen.

Storing items away from cats – Cats climb and jump. Don't assume that because something is up high that your cat can't get it.

Trash bins should have secure covers or be stored in cabinets.

Closets, drawers, cabinets, washer, dryer, and dishwasher should always be checked before closing. Cats love to use those places as their hiding spots. When loading laundry, pick up each piece separately, as cats often sleep in the pile of dirty clothes.





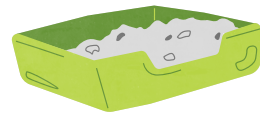
1. Feed the best quality wet cat food you can afford.

- a.** When feeding only wet food, a typical 10-pound adult cat needs roughly 10 ounces per day. This is just a guideline; it varies from cat to cat. Larger cats and convalescing cats need more. Kittens and adolescents can eat as much as they want because they are growing quickly.
- b.** Wet food is preferable to dry because it has more moisture, fewer carbs, and generally higher quality protein.
- c.** Dog food is NOT suitable for cats!

2. Make sure your cat always has clean, fresh water available. Change the water at least once a day (twice is even better). Wash the bowl with warm, soapy water and rinse well.

3. Food and water bowls

- a.** Should be stainless steel. Plastic bowls leach toxins into food/water, and bacteria that collects in scratches in the bowls can lead to feline acne.
- b.** Food bowls should be shallow because that's easier on the cat's whiskers.



4. Litter box

- a.** Put the litter box in a low-traffic location that is easy for your cat to access.
- b.** Scoop the litter box at least once a day. Completely change the litter and wash the litter box using vinegar and hot water at least 2 times a month.
- c.** Most cats prefer clay litter and unscented litter. You can let your cat show you their preference by putting two or three litter boxes with different types of litter next to each other.
- d.** For kittens please refer to the Cat Safety Essentials handout. Clumping litter can be deadly for small kittens. Use natural pine or unscented clay litter for kittens under 4-5 months old.
- e.** Some cats will only use an open litter box. Many cats do not like enclosed top-entry litter boxes, while some others don't mind it.

5. Make sure your cat is spayed or neutered.
6. Never declaw your cat. In fact, it is illegal to do so in NY state and rightly so – because declawing is a cruel and mutilating procedure which is traumatizing for cats. They suffer physically and psychologically for years after they have this procedure.
7. You generally do not need to bathe your cat. They are self-cleaning animals! In exceptional circumstances if you do have to clean your cat, please refer to our Cat Safety Essentials handout.
8. Have a safe environment for the cat. Please refer to our Cat Safety handout.



9. Have a sturdy, secure cat carrier – not cardboard.
10. If you have a long-hair cat, brush regularly to prevent matting.
11. Provide scratching posts
 - a. Some cats prefer vertical scratching posts. One that is tall enough for your cat to stand up and stretch on is ideal.
 - b. Some cats prefer horizontal scratchers. Many horizontal scratchers are available at different price points.
12. Provide safe cat toys to enrich your cat's environment. Always monitor toys and discard them if they break, rip, or fall apart.
13. Provide a hiding place. Many cats are happy with an open carrier or a cardboard box.
14. Provide a cat tree or some vertical space. Most cats like to climb and to hang out in high places.

