

# CAT OWNER HANDBOOK



Courtesy of  
The Thompson Humane Society  
27 Nelson Road  
Thompson, Manitoba  
R8N 0B3  
Phone: (204) 778-3513

## Spaying and Neutering Information

***Spaying and neutering of all animals adopted from the Thompson Humane Society is mandatory. Failure to comply with this may result in legal action and seizure of the animal. Did you know that in a matter of a few years, two intact cats can produce about 70,000 offspring!***

Surgeries are done at the Thompson Veterinary Clinic located at 40 Nelson Road, across the street from our building.

1. All animals must receive all necessary booster vaccinations as required, at least 14 days prior to the surgery. This is to give the vaccination time to start working.
2. Pats are to be brought into the clinic between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. on the day of surgery.
3. Animals must receive **NO FOOD AFTER 8:00 p.m.** the previous evening, and must receive **NO WATER AFTER MIDNIGHT.**
4. Adopters must bring in a valid sterilization coupon at the time that their pet is admitted for surgery. \*If the adopter does not have this coupon for any reason, the surgery will be at the adopters own cost.
5. Sick animals, unvaccinated animals, underdeveloped animals, etc. are unsuitable for surgery and will be rescheduled at the discretion of the veterinary staff.
6. Animals may be tattooed at the time of surgery to provide your pet with permanent, visible identification. This is free of charge and an excellent way of protecting your pet should it become lost.
7. Your pet will be ready to be picked up between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. the day of surgery. Post-operative instructions will be sent home with you.

\*\* Please ensure that your pet is under control via a leash or carrier.

**REMINDER:** If for any reason you need to reschedule the date of surgery, please do so as soon as possible *prior* to the date scheduled.

Thompson Veterinary Clinic: (204) 778-8309

I am aware that a two-week health period applies from the time of adoption, and that I may return the cat to the Thompson Veterinary Clinic, by appointment and pay only for medication in the next two weeks.

I am also aware that it is my responsibility to read the Cat Owner Handbook provided by the Thompson Humane Society as it explains important information I need to know.

Signature of Owner X \_\_\_\_\_

# Nutrition



Good quality nutrition is imperative to your cat's overall well being. It is important to feed your cat or kitten a good quality, balanced diet. Research has proven that a number of cat diseases are greatly influenced by diet; for example, diabetes and heart disease.

Cats are obligate carnivores – that means their appetites are driven by the protein content of a food and not the carbohydrate content.

There are a lot of foods to choose from and they vary a great deal in quality and price.

## **Here are some important facts:**

1. All cats should get a mixture of wet *and* dry food. Since cats are motivated by protein levels, the relatively high carbohydrate and lower protein content of dry food can lead to overeating in order to satisfy their protein requirement.
2. Better quality foods tend to have high protein, better protein sources and are designed to produce urine that does not contribute to urinary tract problems.
3. Semi-moist foods (ie. Tender Vittles) are high in sugar and additives and should be used as *treats only*.
4. Feeding the cat several small meals a day is better than leaving the food out all day for your cat to snack on. There are several advantages; the amount of food the cat eats is known and easily monitored for loss of appetite, can be an important part of some disease treatments (diabetes, obesity) and can be helpful in giving medications or as a training tool.

Food dishes should be stainless steel. Plastic, glass and ceramic dishes have microscopic crevices, which can harbor bacteria.

# Destructive Scratching

Although some people think a cat's scratching behavior is a reflection of its distaste for a couch's upholstery, a not-so-subtle hint to open the drapes, or a poorly conceived Zorro impression, the fact is that a cats desire to scratch objects in their environment is perfectly normal.

Cats scratch for many reasons, including:

- To remove the dead outer layer of their claws.
- To mark their territory by leaving both a visual mark and a scent – they have scent glands on their paws.
- To stretch their bodies and flex their feet and claws.
- To work off energy.

Because scratching is a normal behavior and one that cats are highly motivated to display, it's unrealistic to try to prevent them from scratching. Instead, the goal in resolving scratching problems is to redirect the scratching onto acceptable objects.

Never punish your cat for scratching inappropriate objects. Punishment won't resolve scratching problems because it doesn't teach your cat where to scratch instead. Many of the often prescribed training methods can cause fear and anxiety. It's important to be persistent, consistent and patient. Use positive reinforcement when your cat is behaving appropriately, which may include treats, praise, petting, or a favorite toy or game.

Training methods that can cause problem cats include:

- **Shaker Cans/Booby Traps** – Can lead to skittish behaviors, create fear and anxiety associated with you and humans in general, distrust and may even lead to inappropriate elimination.
- **Scruff Shaking** – Can cause brain and spinal cord damage as it does in human infants.
- **Yelling or Hitting** – Can create fear and anxiety and general distrust of you or humans in general, as well as cause physical damage.
- **Spray Bottles** – Routinely recommended as it *usually* does not cause fear or anxiety problems, but it is only a 'band aid' solution and will likely not end the problem.

If you see the cat attempting to scratch your furniture, carpet, etc., use a key word or noise such as 'tsst' to distract him/her and then bring the cat to a scratching post. If your cat runs, do not chase it. It is also important to remember that the longer the nails, the more intense the desire to scratch. Trimming your cats' claws will also help to prevent them from becoming snagged in carpets and fabrics, not to mention your skin!

If you have any questions about how to direct your cats attention from you furniture to his/her scratching post please call us at (204) 778-3513.

## Cats Need Claws!

Declawing is a procedure whereby a veterinarian amputates the end digit and claw of a cat's paw – similar in scope to cutting off a person's finger at the last joint. The Thompson Humane Society opposes declawing when done solely for the convenience of the owner. Scratching is a natural behavior for cats and can be directed to appropriate items.

Many people say that their cat will be an indoor cat and will never be outdoors unattended. As animal shelter workers, we see many cats come in lost that are 'indoor only' cats. These cats, if declawed, would be defenseless against another cat, or worse, a loose dog.

Complications from surgery, possible alteration of personality, inappropriate litterbox behavior, unnecessary pain and suffering, and sometimes the surrender of a cat to an animal shelter are often the unexpected results of declawing. Some declawed cats can become biters, and develop fearful and/or aggressive behavior towards their owners.

The bottom line is that declawing is a painful and unnecessary procedure banned in most European countries. Due to the many alternatives available, **declawing is not condoned by The Thompson Humane Society**. In our opinion, it should be done *only* if the last remaining alternative is euthanasia.