



Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

Vacation Planning — Don't Forget Your Cat!

Considerable time is spent by people planning their annual vacations. But what about their cats' "vacation"?

Having a responsible and reliable neighbor, friend or relative care for your cat is often the best way to care for an elderly cat. As a cat grows older, its tolerance for change diminishes. Cat sitters should be informed as to your feeding and watering schedule, instructed on cleaning litter boxes and daily monitoring of your cat's health. Always provide the phone number and address of your veterinarian in case of an emergency.

If you decide on a boarding facility, your veterinarian may suggest reputable, local facilities. Before boarding your cat, you should visit the facility.

Carefully note noise levels, offensive odors, size of cages, climate control, ventilation, and lighting. This is also your opportunity to ask the kennel manager questions—Does the facility require a current vaccination certificate? What are the cats fed? Will they administer medicines if your cat requires it? How often do they disinfect the cages? Your reactions to the facility's environment and the answers you receive from the manager will provide you with a solid basis to make an informed decision.

You will have a better vacation knowing that your cat is being cared for by a reliable cat sitter or at a boarding facility that meets your personal approval.

Dealing with Aggressive Behavior in Cats

When cats attack people it is usually a form of predatory, playful or irritable behavior. Stalking and pouncing on a person's feet or ankles is typical of predatory aggression. If the cat is young, the aggression is probably play oriented. In that case, the bite is usually inhibited. However, if the owner has not punished the cat for playing too roughly, it may not have learned to inhibit its bite.

Playful aggression is best redirected toward swinging toys. Irritable aggression usually occurs when the cat is being stroked too roughly or excessively. Petting the cat more gently and for shorter times should resolve that problem.

Aggression among cats in the same household is the most common feline aggression problem. Introduction of a new adult cat will usually provoke aggression. However, aggression can also occur between cats that had lived peacefully together for years. This problem is best handled by separating the cats and slowly reintroducing them.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 1992.



Avoid Common Feeding Errors



Proper nutrition is important to your cat's health. Avoid the following feeding practices because they can create serious health problems for your cat.

Overfeeding leads to the number-one nutritional disease—obesity. Excessive body weight can cause liver disease, heart disease, respiratory problems, and constipation. Also, fat cats are at a greater risk of developing diabetes and arthritis.

Feeding dog food to cats is a common error, especially if dogs and cats are in the same household. Dog foods are developed for the nutritional needs of dogs, not cats. There can be serious consequences if a cat's diet is deficient in protein, niacin, vitamin A, and fatty acids.

Overdosing with vitamin and mineral supplements has been known to cause severe medical problems in cats. Physiological imbalances caused by excess vitamins and minerals can lead to the binding of other nutrients.

Finally, **exclusively feeding meat or fish** results in an unbalanced diet and causes related nutritional diseases.

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