



ANIMAL WELL-BEING

Cats

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Quick cat facts

- There are more pet cats than dogs in the U.S.
- A cat's purr can be a sign of contentment, pain or anxiety
- Cats use their whiskers to "feel" their environment and figure out if they can fit through spaces
- Cats have scent glands in their paw pads, cheeks, and tail and will rub to distribute scent
- Adult cats "meow" to communicate to humans

What is animal well-being?

Animal well-being, or animal welfare, is the ability of an animal to cope with its environment and living conditions. It's

more than simply being healthy. Animal well-being includes:

1. An animal's feelings or emotions, such as contentment;
2. An animal's ability to perform natural behavior, such as grooming, stretching and turning around fully;
3. An animal's health and biological functioning, such as not having injuries or disease.

Do you have an animal well-being concern?

Call your police department or veterinarian.

For livestock and poultry concerns, contact the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) <http://www.in.gov/boah/>

Caring for cats

- Provide fresh, clean water.
- Do not offer milk to cats. Cats are lactose intolerant.
- Provide good-quality nutrition and daily meals. Consult your veterinarian for advice on nutritional needs for your cat's life stage.
- Provide opportunities for exercise and play. Playing with toys can be fun!
- Provide litter boxes, even if the cat goes outdoors occasionally.
- If you have multiple cats, more than one litter box is needed, each in a different area.
- Offer a quiet, secluded space the cat can use to hide. Multiple hiding places are good.



- Don't disturb a resting cat.
- Provide climbing opportunities and shelves at different heights, particularly if you have multiple cats.
- Provide a scratch post.

- Place the scratch post in a well-used room because cats want to scratch in high-activity areas.
- Provide positive interaction, such as petting.
- Cats are intelligent and can be trained using positive reinforcement (such as treats or praise).
- If your cat goes outdoors, microchip and use a break-away collar with a bell.
- Observe your cat's normal behavior and watch for changes (which suggest they are hurt or ill).
- Take your cat to the veterinarian for regular check-ups. Prevention is better than treatment.
- Contact a veterinarian if you think your cat may be hurt or sick.

Signs of poor cat well-being

Changes in a cat's behavior can alert you to a possible problem. Sick or injured cats may show the following behavior or signs:

- Refusing food or eating less than normal
- Drinking more or less water than normal
- Hiding or sleeping more than normal
- Not wanting to play
- Sudden aggression when unprovoked
- Vomiting (except for "hair balls")
- A change in bathroom behavior: specifically,
 - Diarrhea, or lack of bowel movements
 - Eliminating outside the litter box
- Fever (body is too hot)
- Being more vocal than usual
- Difficulty walking or limping
- Woozy or strange body movements

- Licking one area for a long time
- Coughing or sneezing, nasal discharge
- Dull or missing fur
- Open-mouth breathing or panting

Causes of poor cat well-being

Situations that can cause suffering include:

Neglect: failing to care for a cat, such as,

- Not providing necessities (food, water, shelter).
- Endangering a cat's life or health.
- Prolonged injury, sickness or disease without contacting a veterinarian.

Abandonment: deserting the cat without providing means for long-term care.

Cruelty or abuse: causing physical or mental harm, pain or suffering.

Avoid causing:

- Negative feelings such as pain or fear
- Thirst or hunger
- Illness, injury or disease

Undesirable behavior

Fear: A fearful cat will:

- Try to make themselves appear larger by arching their back and raising their fur.



- Run away and hide. Allow your cat to hide; don't chase after them and force them to interact when they feel fearful.

Aggression: Biting, swiping and clawing.

- Provide space for cats to hide.
- Provide separate food, water, and litter boxes in different areas of the house if you have more than one cat.
- When introducing new cats, separate them at first and then gradually introduce them to each other by first letting them smell and then see each other.

Scratching: A behavior that can cause injury to you (or your furniture).

- Provide scratch posts and teach cats how to use them. (YouTube has fun instructional videos!)
- Declawing is not recommended. Declawing is painful, reduces well-being, and should never be done on outdoor cats.