

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Introducing a New Cat

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

As a general rule, the majority of cat owners have two or more pets. However, cats are not "pack" animals and often feel stressed around other cats. Getting another cat may cause yours to stop using the litter box or groom excessively. You also need to decide if you can afford another cat. Never bring a new cat home without getting him tested for Feline Leukemia, FIV, worms, fleas, ear mites, vaccinated and spayed or neutered. This can all run into a lot of money per cat.

Although all cats are different, it is usually easier to get young cats of the same sex to get along. Male cats that are neutered get along better than spayed females. Cats that are not "fixed" WILL fight. If one or both cats are older, then a lengthy "get acquainted" period is needed or they may never become good friends and instead may just barely tolerate each other. There are two secrets to making cat introductions successful. One is to keep them purring and the other is to go slow.

The first few days, don't allow the cats to see each other, just let them sniff where the other one has been, such as your hands, lap and carrier. Put the new cat in a separate room with food, water, and a litter box. You may let the cats sniff at each other under the door and even encourage a little game of "footsies", but keep them happy. If either one starts to hiss or act upset, separate them calmly. You may try feeding them on opposite sides of the door so they may associate good things with each other's smell. If all is going well, you can begin to let them see each other, but keep them separated by a screen door or put one in a carrier. At first keep the distance at least 12 feet. Keep the meetings short and happy. Gradually allow them to approach closer to each other. Again, feeding them in each other's presence is helpful or have a person hold each cat and pet them to get them purring in each other's presence.

DO NOT yell or punish either cat when they are in each other's presence no matter what. If you do they will begin to associate the yelling with seeing the other cat and assume he is the cause. Never leave the cats alone with each other until you are absolutely sure they will get along. An adult cat can easily kill a kitten. Cats are unpredictable to say the least, but it is very rare that you cannot get them to at least tolerate each other unless one or both is an un-neutered male, they are forced into an overcrowded condition or one cat is simply antisocial.

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If you have any questions, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾