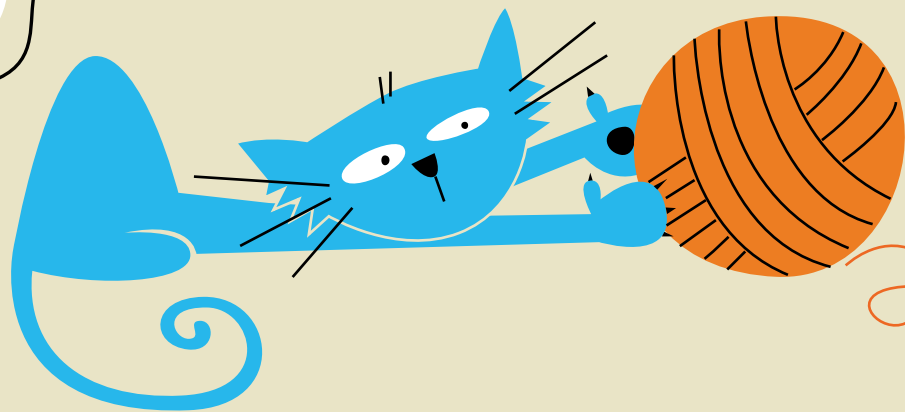


**Preparing**

**For a**

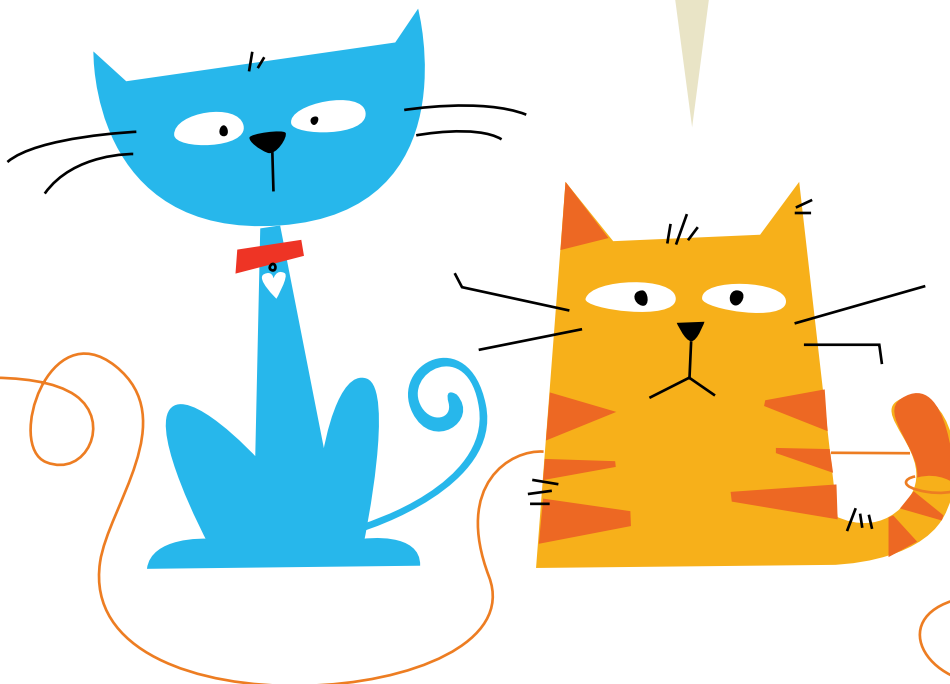
**New Cat**



Sainsbury's Bank

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## Are you ready to get a cat?

### **Before you decide, ask yourself the following questions:**

Will a cat fit into your lifestyle? Cats may be lower maintenance than dogs but you still need to have the time to regularly feed, play and socialise with your new pet.

Is your home suitable for a cat? Do you live away from a busy main road and have safe access to a garden? If you rent, have you checked your tenancy agreement to see if you are allowed pets?

Can you afford it financially? A cat needs regular visits to the vet for vaccinations and you should consider pet insurance costs. Our guide to [demystifying pet insurance](#) could help.

Is anyone in your family allergic? Introducing children to other cats before getting one of your own might tell you if they are allergic.



## Moggies or non-pedigree

The majority of the estimated 400 million cats in the world are non-pedigree or crossbreds, affectionately known as moggies. Non-pedigree cats can be robust and long lived, as crossbreeding reduces genetic health problems.

## What type of cat?

### Pedigree

Pedigree cats are bred especially to keep certain characteristics such as colours or patterns. Did you know that pedigree breed type can also have an influence on personality?

**Did you know you can learn to talk cat?** It is simply a matter of paying attention. Our guide explaining [cat behaviours](#) can help you interpret exactly what your cat is trying to tell you!



## British Shorthair



Laid back, affectionate and good with children. Big in size - males can grow up to 17 pounds.

## Persian

Arguably the most glamorous of all cats. Requires daily grooming - that beautiful coat will shed a lot of hair!



## Exotic Shorthair



Bred to be a short haired version of a Persian - no more daily grooming. Lively and playful.

## Maine Coon

The largest of all the domestic cat breeds. Like to 'talk' and have a large range of noisy yowls and chirps.



## Ragdoll



Extremely affectionate - ragdolls will come greet you at the door. Great with children and usually don't mind living with friendly dogs.

## Siamese

Highly intelligent and like to be involved with family activities. Get stressed if left alone for long, so if possible should live in pairs.



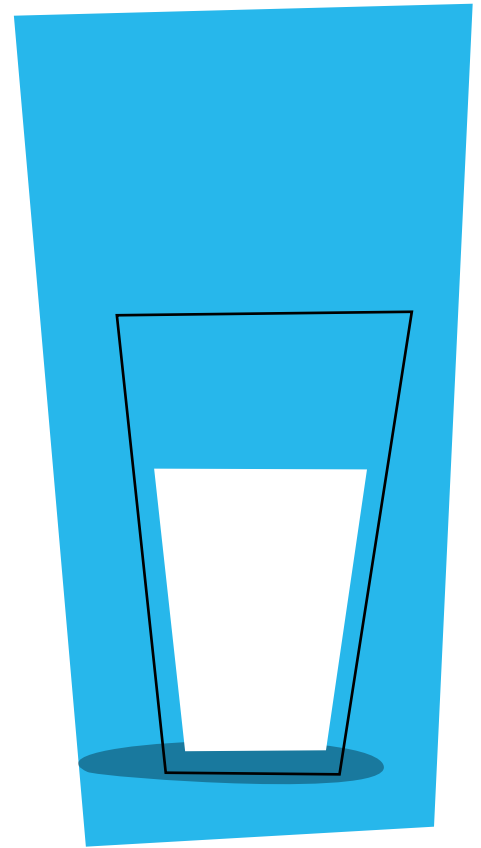
# Choosing a kitten

Kittens are bundles of raucous energy but they also require a lot of time and effort to ensure they develop into a happy and socialised adult cat. Our checklist has some tips to ensure you are getting a happy and healthy new pet:

Make sure your new kitten is at least 8 weeks old before taking them home - if a kitten has bright blue eyes, it usually means that they are still too young to leave their mother. Their eyes change colour to their natural colour between 5-7 weeks.

Ask to see the kitten's mother - kittens should have been taught basic cat behaviours - kittens copy their mother, including how to use a litter box and how to hunt.

Check that the kitten has been socialised - kittens should be handled regularly.



# Choosing an adult cat

**When choosing an adult cat, consider the following:**

Where the cat has lived before. Is it used to other cats, animals, and / or young children?

Ask about the cat's health. Has it been neutered and vaccinated? Does it have any illnesses you need to be prepared for?

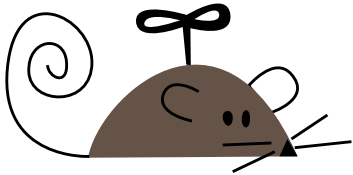
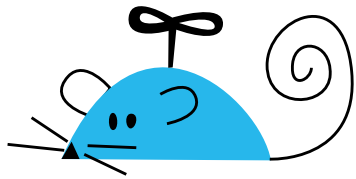
Check what the cat eats. Is it on wet or dry food? Does it need a special diet? Cats don't like change, so it's best to continue giving it the food it's used to.

Find out if it's an indoor or outdoor cat. If the cat has previously been allowed outdoors you should continue to let it out.

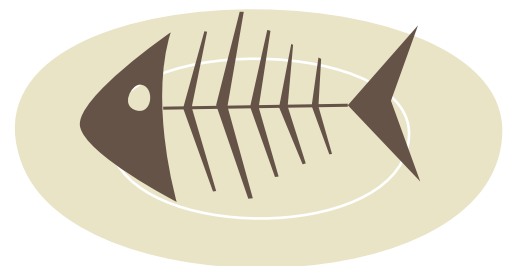
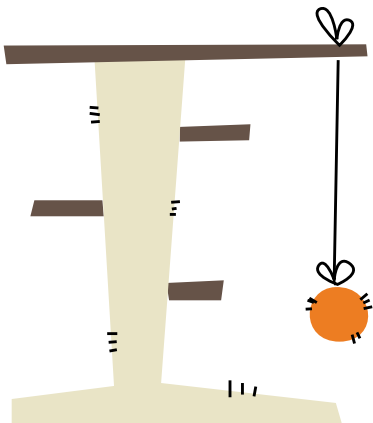
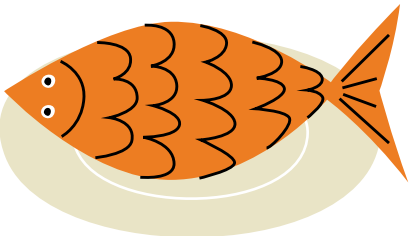
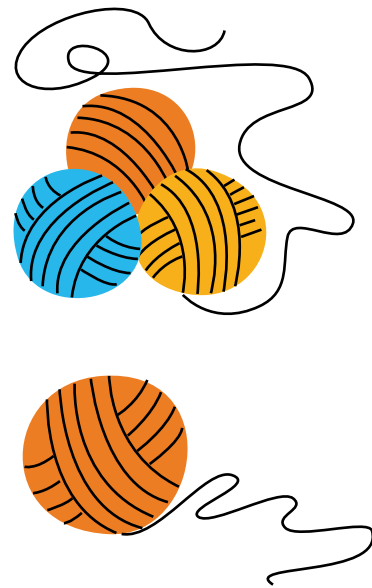




# What your cat will need



- **A secure cat carrier** - to bring your cat home and to take it to the vets
- **Cat food, food and water bowls**
- **A litter tray** - place this in a quiet corner, or in a cupboard - cats like privacy
- **A cat scratcher** - will help reduce damage to curtains and furniture. Cat Nip, a natural herb which cats love, can help persuade your cat to use a scratcher
- **Collar & ID tag** - some cats prefer not to wear a collar so you may want to microchip your cat instead
- **A cat flap** - so your cat can come and go as it pleases (if you want)
- **A cat bed & blanket**
- **Toys!**



# Bringing your cat home

Cats are territorial and need to feel like they have their own safe and defensible space - so set up a safe room.

## You will need:

- A spare room or quiet corner
- Food and water bowls
- A litter tray
- Cat bed
- Scratching post and toys

Collect your cat in a secure cat carrier.

When you get home, place your cat in your 'safe room' and open the cat carrier. Leave your cat to explore the safe room on its own. Your cat should stay in the safe room for the first 2-3 days.

Wait for the cat to come out of the carrier on its own - don't force it out.

To avoid added stress, bring your cat home when the house is quiet.

Keep small children and other animals out of the safe room.

Use this time to bond with your cat - try sitting on the floor and letting your cat come to you. Your cat may rub against you; this means they are 'scenting' you which helps to build trust.





# Letting your cat explore



## If you have no other pets:

- When the house is quiet open the door to the safe room
- Let your cat come out in its own time
- Leave the door open so they can quickly run back in

## If you have other pets

It is important to introduce them slowly and try not to leave them alone until they are comfortable with each other.



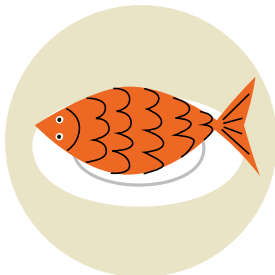
- Rub both animals with a soft towel to share their scent
- Give your current pet lots of attention
- Use separate food bowls, slowly bring them closer together

# Letting your cat outside



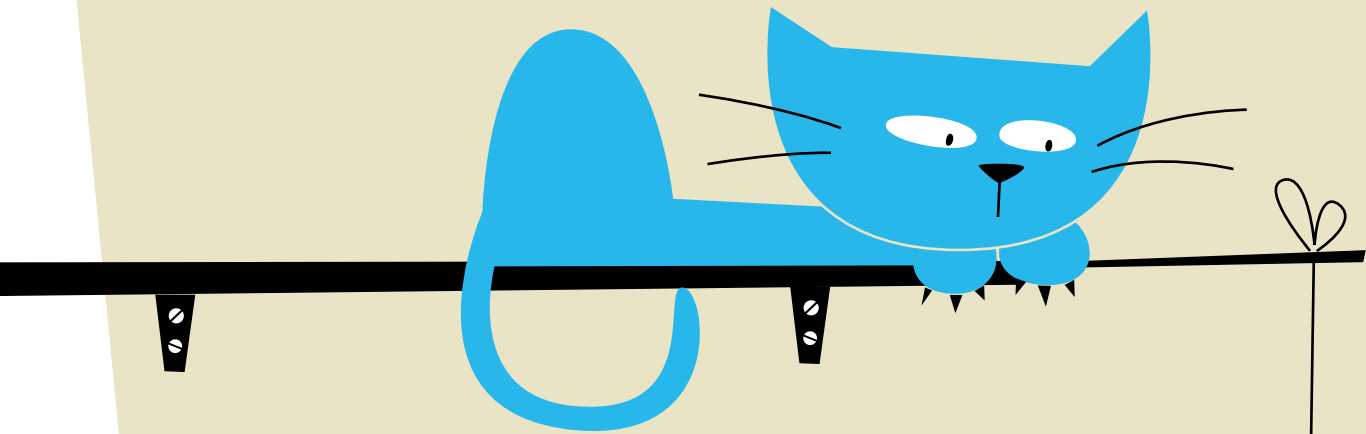
Before you let your cat out ensure it is up to date with its vaccinations and has been neutered. Your cat should also have identification, either a collar or microchip, in case it gets lost.

If you have rescued an adult cat it is recommended that it stays indoors for the first few weeks so it can get used to its new environment.



## Will my cat come back?

- Try a cat harness - although your cat may not like it
- Let your cat out before dinner, a hungry cat is more likely to come home
- Use treats to call your cat to you



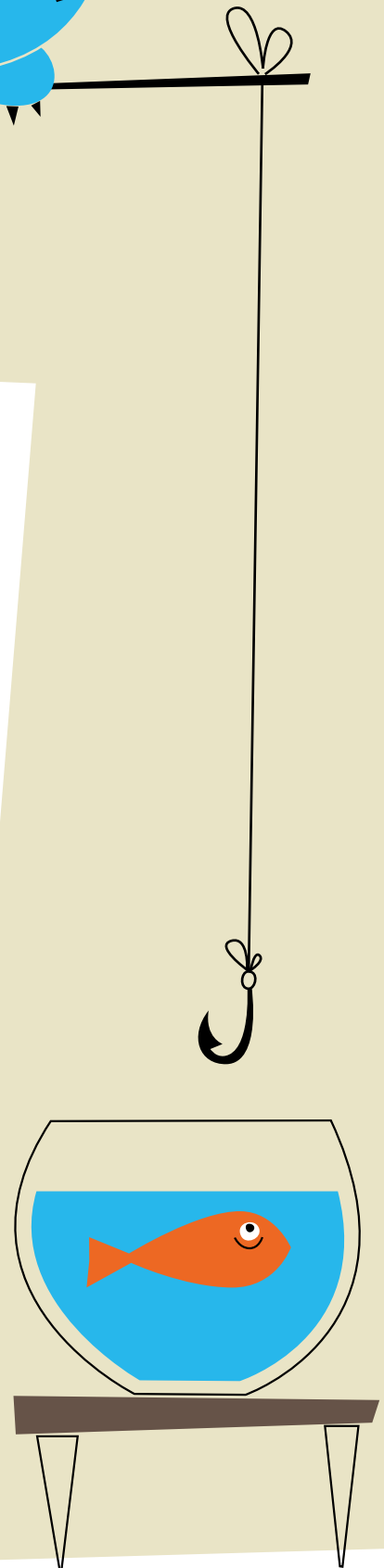
## Play and discipline

Whatever age, cats love playing. It can also help create a bond, keeps them active and healthy and is great for their mobility.

Play is particularly important for kittens as you are continuing what their mother cat started, by teaching them hunting instincts. However, play can easily turn into aggression, so here are some tips to help you both enjoy it:

- Don't allow your cat to chase your fingers or toes, it may really hurt!
- Limit time with any toys that encourage over-excitement
- Try cat trees, novelty cat boxes and activity centres (ensure your cat can't get trapped)
- Let them have the thrill of pounce, but not too easily or they will get bored

If your cat does scratch you, immediately stop the play and leave the room - don't shout at your cat as they won't know what they have done wrong.



# Protecting and looking after your cat

## Research vets in your local area:



Cats need vaccinations against cat diseases such as feline flu. Your cat will need a booster every six months.

Your vet will also check for other health issues such as infections, treat fleas and worms.

Kittens usually have their first vets visit at 13 weeks old, with neutering & spaying usually carried out at around four months of age.

Female kittens can become pregnant as early as 16 weeks so it is recommended that they are **neutered** before they go outside.



## Consider microchipping:

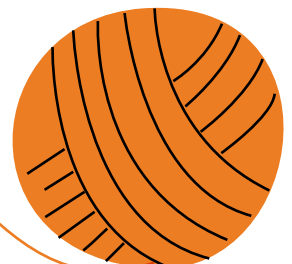
This is a safe form of identification and can help improve the chance of finding your cat if it becomes lost. Ask your vet for more advice.

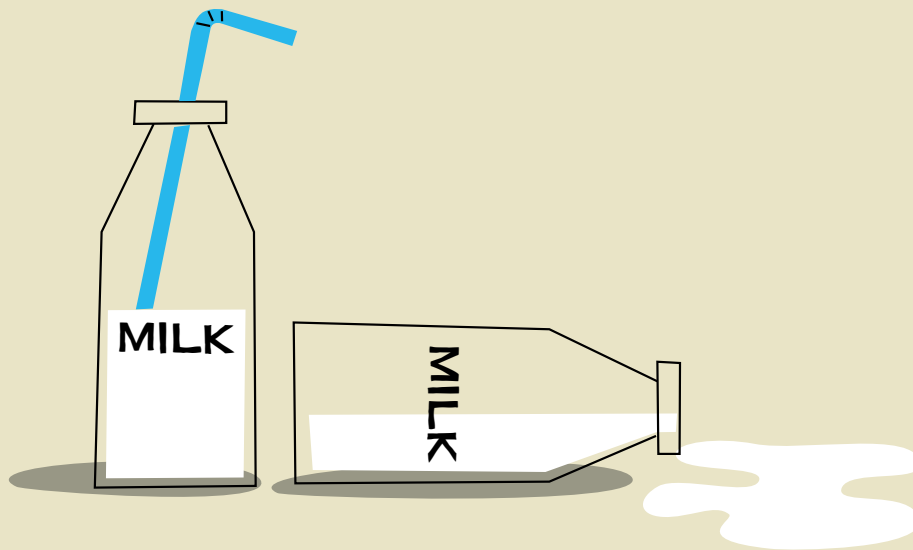
## Pet Insurance



To protect against future illnesses or accidents it is recommended that you take out pet insurance. Policies vary when it comes to the level of cover they offer. In addition, each company will apply their own conditions and exclusions to their policies.

Research pet insurance policies before you buy and check for policy limitations.





## Sources

<http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/pet-insurance/demystifying-pet-insurance.shtml>

<http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/money-matters/cat-behaviours-explained.shtml>

<http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/pet-insurance/neutering-your-pet.shtml>

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**All information was correct at date of publication. This guide was updated and published on 26 May 2015.**