THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOUR NEW CAT OR KITTEN

It's an exciting experience when you make the decision to adopt a cat or a kitten from your local breeder or shelter! While it's probably the first thing you want to do, there are a lot of things you need to do before it's time to play with your new furry friend.

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This guide outlines the steps you can follow to take care of your new pet, and is divided into three parts:

Taking Care of Your Kitty

- How to kitten (or cat) proof your home
- Time to bring home your new kitty!
- Enrich your cat's indoor environment
- Are you letting your cat outside in summer?
- 5 steps to get your cat comfortable in the carrier

Health, Wellbeing, and Your Veterinarian

- Is your cat showing signs of pain?
- My cat is vomiting, what should I do?

Pet Health Insurance

- Pet health insurance gives peace of mind
- Pet health insurance terms to know
- About Petsecure - What's covered?
- About Petsecure - Questions to consider

HOW TO KITTEN (OR CAT) PROOF YOUR HOME

Kitties are curious about everything! If you've never had a cat or kitten in your home, read these tips to make your indoor environment engaging and safe:

- Define a safe space for your cat or kitten. They will sleep in their own kennel, cardboard boxes, or closets.
- Cats love to climb and watch their territory from up on high. Give your cat a dedicated shelf, the top of a piece of furniture, or something else for them to be able to rest from above.
- Don't forget birdwatching! Make sure there are lots of windows where your kitty can sit and watch what's going on outdoors.

Make your home safe

- Secure all windows and doors. Ensure that window screens and sliders are intact to prevent cats from escaping and getting injured during falls. Never leave windows open while animals are unsupervised.
- Fold and secure your window blind cords with a rubber band or tape out of kitty's reach. There is risk of strangulation if they become tangled.
- Keep non-food objects like strings, elastics, electrical cords, and children's toys out of reach to prevent chewing and potential foreign body obstruction.
- Keep toxic plants out of the home. Watch for houseplants poisonous to cats. These include: lilies, azaleas, ficus, jade, and eucalyptus plants.
- Keep valuables and breakables stored out of reach.
- Invest in covered wastebaskets and garbage containers.
- Ensure they can't become trapped in cupboards, the washing machine or clothes dryer.
- Purchase covers for electric cords your kitty can reach. Some common cords are computers, TVs, and phone chargers.

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TIME TO BRING HOME YOUR NEW KITTY!

Now that you've made your home a safe and engaging space for you kitty, it's time to help your new furry family member get settled!

Make sure all family members are on board with a new cat or kitten. Set up rules and routines for the whole family.

Have all pet supplies ready before bringing them home.

Make sure to stay calm and allow them to say hello to everyone. Make slow introductions with resident pets.

Have a quiet room set up for them with a litterbox, bedding, and toys.

After bringing your cat or kitten home, visit the vet for a complete checkup, vaccinations, and ensure they are identified. Microchips are the best way to keep your cat safe in the case they escape the house. Tattoos and break-away collars are great back-ups but aren't reliable primary forms of identification.

Once they settle in, keep and eye out for other hazards. For example, supervise your cat around hot stovetops, lit candles, and burning fireplaces to prevent burns.

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ENRICH YOUR CAT'S INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Below are some suggestions for how you can supply a stimulating and nurturing home for your cat to live and play.

Cat Trees and Scratching Posts

Some cats prefer to scratch vertically, others horizontally. Try to see what your cat prefers and supply different scratching posts (including several textures) in different rooms of the house. Remember, this is a natural behavior that your cat should be allowed to express.

Play!

Cats love to play. Give your companion several toys in rotation and watch what they prefer. Balls, sticks with feathers or ribbons, a pop-up tunnel, toys that crinkle or jingle – the options are endless. When in doubt, check with your veterinarian if the toy is safe. You can even teach your cat some basic tricks!

Food Stimulation

Replace a traditional food bowl with interactive feeding tools. Your cat will have to "hunt" to collect their food, which will be much more satisfying and stimulating. There are several bowls and balls with different levels of difficulty on the market.

A View of the Outside

Give window access to your cat. A view of outdoor activities, movement and nature provide mental stimulation for whenever they feel the need or want. Higher windows also provide the purrfect view! Ensure windows are safe from potential falls and escape.

A Safe Place

Whether it's a cushion, a cardboard box or a small tent, this place must be always be accessible for your cat. they can hide and rest there without being disturbed when needed.

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ARE YOU LETTING YOUR CAT OUTSIDE IN SUMMER?

Keep things cool

Make sure there's plenty of water and shade available for your cat. For safety reasons, keep your cat indoors and be sure to turn on a fan or use air conditioning on hot days.

Secure all windows

Secure window screens to prevent cats from escaping and getting injured if falling from heights. Remember to never leave windows open when animals are unsupervised.

Walk on grass instead of sidewalks

Always keep your cat on a leash when outdoors and stick to the grass on hot days. If the pavement feels too hot for your bare feet, then it's too hot for your cat's paws.

Build a catio

Since cats are not allowed outside unsupervised or without a leash, consider building an outdoor catio for your feline to lounge in during the summer.

Prevent sunburn

Cats have sensitive skin and can get sunburns just like us. Certain breeds are at higher risk, especially if they have light skin or pink noses.

Never leave in the car

Leaving a pet in a vehicle during the summer is dangerous. Temperatures inside a parked vehicle get to 48˚C easily, which can cause dehydration, overheating, and in extreme cases, death.

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5 STEPS TO GET YOUR CAT COMFORTABLE IN THE CARRIER

(so you don't have to miss important vet visits!)

1. **Change your cat's association with the carrier**
   Take the door off your carrier, place it inside your cat's favourite room, and lightly spray with feline pheromone spray to encourage exploration.

2. **Encourage your cat to go near the carrier**
   Place your cat's favourite treats near their carrier until they take interest. Slowly work your way up to placing their treats right in front of the carrier, and eventually inside.

3. **Practice closing the carrier door**
   Once your cat is comfortable going inside the carrier, close the door for a few seconds, open it and offer a treat. Add this to your training routine.

4. **Get your cat comfortable with the car**
   With your cat already in the carrier, sit with them for a few minutes in the car without turning the engine on. Repeat until they're comfortable being in the car.

5. **Turn the engine on but don't go anywhere**
   Once your cat's okay with the engine being on, try going for a short ride around the block.

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DON'T

- Force your cat into a carrier headfirst
- Swing the carrier or bump into doors
- Travel with your cat loose in the car

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IS YOUR CAT SHOWING SIGNS OF PAIN?

Did you know cats are excellent at hiding signs of pain? In truth, hiding pain is a protective instinct cats use in the wild. By hiding signs of pain or weakness, they avoid attention from predators.

Changes in behaviour:

- Unusual vocalization (meowing, purring, hissing, growling, groaning)
- Temperament: Acting more or less affectionate or cuddly
- Low energy, less playful, or restless
- Decreased grooming or a scruffy coat
- Running away or not allowing anyone to pick them up
- Showing aggression like biting or hissing

Changes in activity

- Eating or drinking less than normal
- Panting at rest or breathing faster
- Urinating or defecating outside litter box
- Straining in the litter box
- Changes in frequency of urination or defecation

Changes in Movement

- Licking, biting, or scratching at an area on their body
- Sleeping more or in unusual places
- Decreased movement including difficulty jumping heights that were previously easy to reach
- Limping
- Trembling or shaking

Posture

- Looking stiff, hunching or 'tucked in'
- Lying or standing in different or unusual positions
- Flicking tail

Expression

- Squinting or avoiding bright light
- Grimacing, or having a glazed expression
- Dilated pupils
- Flattening ears

If your cat starts showing any unusual or new behaviours, it could be due to pain. Signs are often gradual and slowly progress which makes them easy to miss.

Never give your cat pain medication without consulting your veterinarian; cats are very sensitive to pain medication. All over-the-counter pain and "human" fever medications are toxic for cats.

Regular exams with your veterinarian are recommended to check for these subtle problems, as well as assess your cat's overall health.

If your cat is in pain, your vet can help you find the best product and dose to keep them comfortable.

MY CAT IS VOMITING! WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Vomiting (or hairballs) is a common problem in cats, and often incorrectly thought to be "normal." There are many reasons why your cat may vomit, so it's important to monitor frequency, symptoms and behaviours.

Environmental or external causes of vomiting:

- Hairballs
- Eating too fast
- Eating something dangerous
  - Foreign body (ex: string)
  - Toxic plant or food
  - Toxic chemicals or medication
- Food intolerance or allergy
- Parasites

Internal causes of vomiting:

- Inflammatory bowel syndrome
- Diabetes
- Hyperthyroidism
- Kidney insufficiency
- Tumor
- Constipation
- Liver disease
- Pancreatitis

! It's important to determine if your cat is vomiting, coughing or regurgitating. All three are similar in appearance and are difficult to differentiate.

Frequent or severe vomiting can be harmful to your cat's health. Signs of concern include:

- Vomiting regularly (ex: weekly)
- Vomiting daily (3-4 times within the same day)
- Vomiting blood
- Known access to toxic plants, medications, or chemicals

Other symptoms to look out for when your cat is vomiting:

- Decreased appetite or drinking
- Decreased energy or lethargy
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Weight loss
- Signs of pain or discomfort

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If your cat begins vomiting, call your veterinarian. They will ask questions, perform a physical examination, and may recommend further tests to determine a cause of vomiting. Pictures and samples of the vomit are also helpful when diagnosing the problem.

Don't give your cat any medications unless directed by your veterinarian (cats are very sensitive to medications, and all over-the-counter pain and "human" fever medications are toxic for cats).

Once a cause has been found, your vet will suggest treatment.

PET HEALTH INSURANCE GIVES PEACE OF MIND

Pet insurance can help with reimbursement for medical costs. If your pet gets sick or has an accident, Petsecure covers diagnostics, X-rays, hospitalization, surgery, medication and more.

We believe you should have the freedom to make decisions about your pet's medical care with your heart, not your wallet.

How does it work?

1. Get a quote and then purchase a plan that suits your budget and has the coverage you're comfortable with.
2. Satisfy the waiting period. For accidents, the waiting period is 48 hours, 14 days for illness and six months for dental coverage.
3. Make a claim. Pay your vet bill and have an authorized veterinary clinic employee complete the claim form and sign it.
4. Send your completed claim form and relevant receipts to us. Your applicable reimbursement will be sent to you via cheque or direct deposit.

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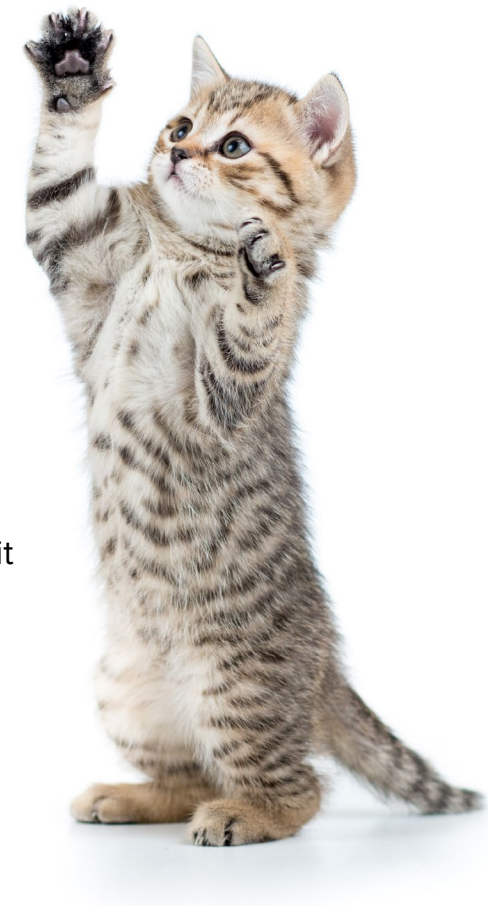
PET HEALTH INSURANCE TERMS TO KNOW

Co-Insurance

Co-insurance is the portion of the claim that the policy holder is responsible for. Petsecure covers 80% of eligible veterinary fees. The 20% of the claim that the policy holder is responsible for is referred to as co-insurance.

Petsecure believes that co-insurance is a way of sharing in responsible pet ownership and ensuring that premiums are kept affordable.



Deductibles

The annual deductible is an amount that must be satisfied, or subtracted from claims prior to being reimbursed - it is once per policy year.

For example - if you have a $100.00 deductible, when you submit a claim, we will take 80% of eligible expenses and subtract the $100.00 from the total, all eligible expenses beyond that would be paid out and then for the rest of the policy year simply 80% of your claims would be paid out up to your policy limits.

If you submit a smaller claim, it will help to satisfy a portion of that deductible until met.

Pre-existing conditions

A pre-existing condition is a condition or illness that has shown signs or symptoms prior to your policy, or within your waiting periods. This applies with or without a confirmed diagnosis.

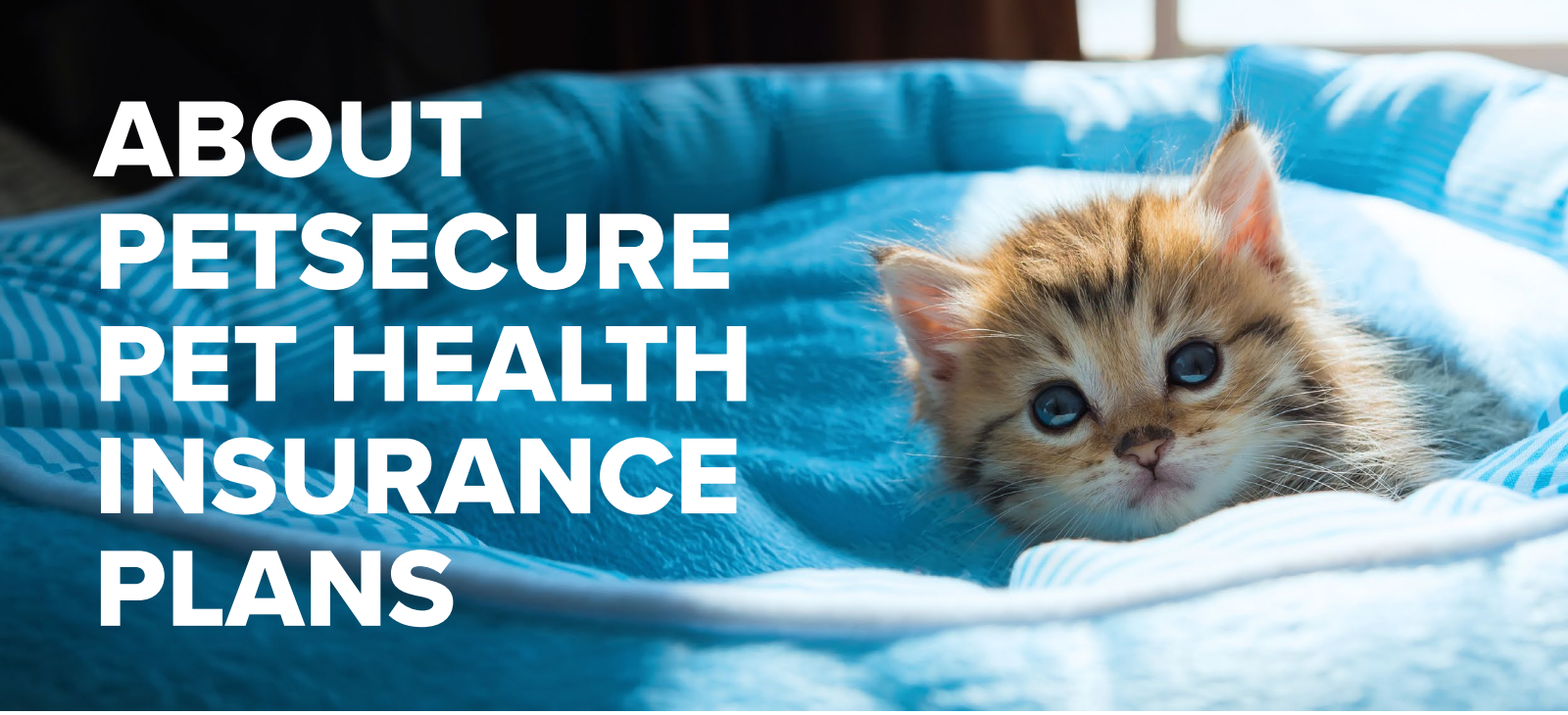
Pet insurance takes the financial stress out of veterinary visits. It can reimburse costs for accidents, illnesses, behaviour issues, wellness, dental care and more!

It's ideal to set up an insurance policy when your cat is younger, before any medical problems develop. The average premium for cats in 2020 was $369/year[1] (approximately $31/month), and all it takes is 1-2 minor accidents or illnesses to justify the cost.

Consider putting 'money away' each month into a pet insurance premium. Pet guardians will have access to potentially thousands of dollars after any waiting periods.

[1] 2021 North American Pet Health Industry Report, https://naphia.org/industry-data/section-3-average-premiums/

ABOUT PETSECURE PET HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS



What's covered?

- Up to 80% of your vet bill, including the exam fees and taxes
- Accidents and illnesses
- Diagnostics
- X-rays
- Emergency care and hospitalization
- Surgeries
- Medications
- Dental coverage – cost of annual cleanings or problems with the teeth or gums
- Other benefits like boarding/kennel fees, lost pet advertising and more
- Alternative treatments like acupuncture or massage
- Behavioural therapy
- Medical devices

What isn't covered?

- Any condition where signs or symptoms were showing before the policy started or before the end of the waiting periods
- Optional or elective treatments you choose to have carried out that aren't directly related to an insured accident or illness
- Food and special diets
- Spay or neuter surgery
- Pregnancy and whelping

Visit petsecure.com or call 1.800.268.1169 for a free quote!

Petsecure is available to residents of Canada and provides coverage to eligible pets. All coverage described in this document is subject to the terms, conditions, limitations, and exclusions contained in our Policy Wordings. In the event of a discrepancy between the content of this document and your Policy Wordings, the Policy Wordings govern.

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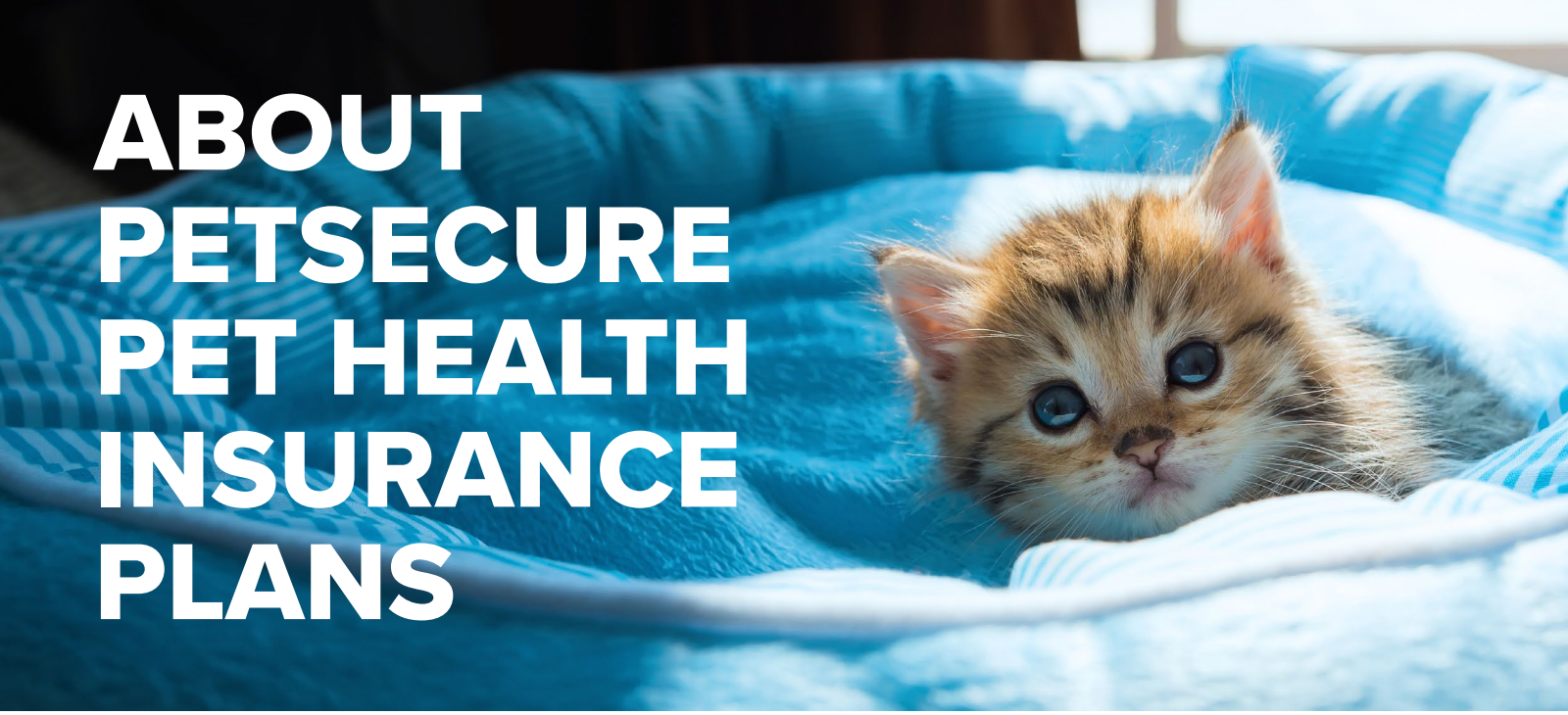

Are there different plans I can choose from?

Yes – there are four different plans you can choose from depending on your budget and comfort level.

Does the plan include dental coverage?

Yes – every plan level has an annual coverage amount that can be used towards routine dental care.

Are there waiting periods?

Yes – 48 hours for accidents, 14 days for illness, and 6 months for dental, cruciate, and intervertebral disk disease.

Are hereditary conditions, like hip dysplasia, covered?

Yes – hereditary or congenital conditions are included in coverage, as long as they're not pre-existing.

Are there options for coverage for routine care?

Yes – our Secure 4 plan includes wellness coverage that can be used for annual exams and vaccinations, annual bloodwork, flea control, preventative heartworm medication and more.

Are vet exam fees and taxes covered?

Yes.

Is there coverage for alternative therapies?

Yes – when prescribed by a vet, we cover things like homeopathic treatments, stem cell therapy, laser therapy, physiotherapy and more.

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