

## Choosing a reliable kitty sitter

The next time you're out of town, who will take care of Fluffy or Felix?

Some cat families choose to board their kitty at a veterinary clinic or boarding facility. The advantage is that people are present to observe and care for your cat throughout the day. Other cat families opt to use a kitty sitter stopping in to provide care. The advantage is that your cat stays in his or her home.



Choosing a kitty sitter can be difficult since not everyone has the same standards of care. You want someone who will do more than just fill up a food bowl and instead, provide the daily care that your cat needs while you are away. If possible, ask family members or friends for a referral. In all cases, ask lots of questions about what you and your cat can expect from your kitty sitter while you are away.

### **What type of person makes the best kitty sitter? Look for someone who:**

- Loves cats! Are they truly fixated on felines – or just think cats are easy to care for?
- Maintains a regular cat-sitting schedule. You'll want someone who takes their responsibilities seriously and doesn't just "fit you in."
- Has experience with cats (or whatever your type of pet).
- Provides good references. Be sure to find out what others think and what they liked or didn't like about the kitty sitter's services.
- Has no criminal history. Enough said!

### **What should you ask a prospective kitty sitter?**

Plan a first meeting with a prospective kitty sitter to get to know them and to see how they interact with your cat or cats. During this interview, find out:

- How much time will the kitty sitter spend with your cat each day? Request a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour per visit at least once a day, but ideally twice daily.
- What will he/she do during this time? Feeding alone is not enough. Daily interaction, play and observation are all important to your cat's wellbeing.
- Will they schedule a no-charge "orientation" to learn about your cat's needs, normal behavior and routines? It's important for your cat to be familiar with the kitty sitter before you leave.
- What services does kitty sitting include? You want someone who will clean litter boxes daily, give medication and transport your cat to the veterinarian if needed.
- How committed are they? Make sure you are both on the same page in terms of expectations and standards for care.
- Is the pet sitter bonded and insured? If not, there are risks to your home and property.
- Does the kitty sitter know pet CPR and are they trained in handling pet medical emergencies?
- What are the kitty's sitter's fees and how will you be charged? Be sure you agree on this ahead of time!

