



# Pointers On Pets

## Tips To Consider When Adopting A Cat

(NAPSA)—Adopting a pet means making a long-term commitment—one that should be considered carefully.

Safe Steps Home, a program created by The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the makers of Fresh Step® Scoopable cat litter, provide some essential things to consider before adopting a cat:

- Are you ready for a lifetime commitment? Adopting a cat or kitten means making a life-long commitment. This can be up to 20 years for a cat. “Take time choosing the right cat for your family—whether playful, quiet or rowdy,” suggests singer/songwriter Jann Arden, an ardent supporter of Safe Steps Home and happy owner of three rescue cats. “Consider whether or not you’ll have the time to devote to something that devotes all its time to you.”

- What pet is right for your home? Problems such as allergies and apartment restrictions should be considered before you adopt a pet. Do not expect to keep your cat outdoors. Cats who live outside face dangers from infectious diseases, other animals and people and may prey on wildlife.

- Can you afford the costs associated with owning a cat? These costs include basic and emergency veterinary care, toys, supplies and food. Spaying and neutering is also essential for an animal’s long-term health and happiness, as is providing the pet with proper identification. (Many shelters provide low or no cost spaying/neutering upon adoption.)

- Who will care for the pet? If you are getting a pet for your child, it is unrealistic to expect the child to do all the work. No matter how mature your child is, you will need to provide constant supervision and act as a backup when your child is unable to handle the responsibility. One adult should be designated as the cat’s primary caretaker and see to its needs. Additionally, you should consider who would take care of your pet should moving issues arise. Allow extra time to find a new home for the pet if necessary.

- Learn more about cat behav-



**A new program supports cat rescue efforts and helps educate people about why cats are abandoned.**

ior. Behavioral problems are one of the most common reasons for owners to abandon cats. Many times what owners don’t realize is that certain behaviors are natural for cats. Some signal the need for a trip to the vet, and others can easily be managed through training/behavior modifications.

Each year millions of cats and kittens are brought to shelters with the hope of finding permanent homes. Millions more live on the street. Cats who live outside face dangers from other animals and people and may prey on wildlife. With every purchase of Fresh Step® Scoopable cat litter, the makers of Fresh Step Scoopable will make a donation (up to \$250,000 annually) to the Safe Steps Home program. Financial grants are awarded to innovative cat rescue programs that help care for and manage stray populations as well as encourage cat adoption.

Arden considers her cats a source of “constant comfort.” She suggests that people who are considering acquiring a cat “have an open heart. Think about the cat and the quality of life you could provide for it.” In a tribute to the plight of homeless cats, Arden has rerecorded her song “Saved.” CDs with the hit single will be made available to cat lovers. To receive your free CD, while supplies last, send in a minimum \$10 donation to: ASPCA Gift Processing Center, Attn: CD Offer, PO Box 96929, Washington, D.C. 20090-6929.

To learn more, visit [www.freshstep.com](http://www.freshstep.com) or [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org).