

Questions to Ask Yourself Before Fostering a Cat...



Does my schedule permit me to spend quality time with a foster cat?

Most fosters have traditional schedules with full-time jobs, and many still have social lives on top of being a volunteer. **The most important consideration when gauging your ability to foster is whether you can offer a consistent routine for the animal, and if you can make it to Tree House if your foster cat isn't feeling well.** Felines thrive with steady, regular schedules! On average, we ask that you allot about 2 hours a day to caring for and spending time with your foster. More complicated medical cases and litters of kittens would require a longer daily commitment. Also consider what kind of a consistent routine you can provide in the way of managing medications, feeding/cleaning up after your fosters, and making time for play & enrichment.

Am I able to transport a foster cat to Tree House for appointments?

This is a big one! Tree House provides all medical care for the cats in our Foster Program, but it's up to you to bring the animal to [our facility](#) for checkups at the clinic! Appointments are scheduled via the Foster Program as needed for vaccinations, vet checks, and spay/neuter (or other) surgeries. Vaccination appointments and weigh-ins for kittens are scheduled every 2-3 weeks. Veterinarian appointments are also scheduled as needed, but generally every 7-14 days. When fosters aren't feeling well, they may need to see a vet more frequently.

- **Am I willing to take a rideshare or taxi to appointments if my foster cat doesn't do well on public transit?**

Taking public transit can be one option for getting around, but it's stressful and may not be the best option for some cats. If you do not have a car, consider taking a taxi or securing a ride through friends or family. Another option to explore local volunteer pet transport groups that help rescue cats make their way around town.

- **Can I transport to Tree House if an emergency occurs?**

At the first sign of medical concern or illness, always contact Tree House first. We have a full-time veterinarian on staff, and our clinic is open 7 days a week. We want foster kitties to be seen in-house whenever concerns arise. Unless given express permission, Tree House does not authorize the use of outside veterinary services and will not cover the cost of unauthorized visits.

Am I willing to make time for the daily caregiving needs of my foster cat/kittens and follow the appropriate steps for disinfection of my home after they are returned?

Housing and caring for any animal comes with a certain level of daily caregiving and maintenance. This includes scooping their litter box at least once a day, feedings, cleaning a crate if required, laundry, and sweeping/mopping. Fostering often means caring for animals who are being treated for illness, so it is up to the foster parent to prevent the spread of contaminants and disease between foster animals and resident pets, as well as maintaining a clean environment for the next

cat you care for. We'll teach you about the recommended cleaning solutions and how to disinfect properly, but if you don't have time for necessary caregiving/monitoring/medications and cleaning up after your animal, this may not be the right volunteer job for you.

How do I feel about possible damages from housing a foster cat?

Keeping foster animals - just like any pet - runs the risk of damages to carpeting, clothing, furniture, etc. Tree House is here to offer guidance to help curb any undesired behavior, but keep in mind that by signing up to foster you are consenting that you understand this risk. **Tree House is not responsible for any damages that may occur during the foster period.**

Can I safely house a foster cat completely separated from my own resident pets?

Tree House requires that foster cats are kept isolated from any resident pets, and that they remain separated for the duration of the foster period, unless special approval is granted. This means keeping the foster cat in a room that can be closed off to other pets. Large closets, pantries, extra bedrooms, small offices, and even play pens are also sufficient areas of isolating fosters, depending on the needs of the situation.

What kind of isolation space do I have?

We recommend a space that is easily cleaned and at least 17-20 square feet. Spaces with a lot of household belongings, carpeting or upholstery are not ideal due to difficulty of disinfection. Keep in mind that cats also love vertical space, too! Adding this option through shelves, window ledges, or even cat trees can expand a smaller territory quite a bit. Some animals may need to be housed in a large dog crate for some (or most) of the foster period (i.e. very young kittens or cats that need a specific kind of recovery).

Am I comfortable explaining to my friends that the animal is not mine to adopt out?

All potential adopters (even fosters who want to adopt!) must contact Tree House for assistance with the adoption process. We LOVE when our foster volunteers market their fosters for adoption, and you can even host meet and greets in your home, but let anyone interested in adoption know they must take the next steps with Tree House directly. No foster cats should be ever moved into a new home without direct permission from Tree House.

How do I feel about saying goodbye at the end of the foster period?

It can be difficult to let go when your foster cat is ready for the next step. Saying goodbye is never easy, but keep in mind that by doing so, you keep helping us save more lives! The opportunity to say 'yes' to helping the next cat can make parting ways with a current foster a little easier. You'll enjoy meeting many different personalities through our Foster Program, and you'll be making a huge impact by continuing to help animals in need.