

Adopting an Older Pet

It's easy to have your heart melt at the sight of a kitten or puppy -- they are just so darn cute! But it's the older pets that pull at our heartstrings.

They have so much to offer as a companion; it's a crime that so many sit waiting for permanent homes while the young ones are easily adopted.

Some people may think: "Why would someone relinquish a pet they've had for years? There must be something wrong with it!

The truth is, that often there is nothing wrong with the pet at all. Pets of all ages are relinquished for any number of reasons. Homeless pets are victims of circumstance and dependent on humans to provide them with a home.

The next time you are considering adding to your family, remember the older pets who wait quietly in their crates for someone to notice them.

Susan Easterly, author of *Your Older Cat*, writes, "Elder cats give us the gift of time when no one else has any to spare."

It is the same for older dogs. Consider adopting an older pet -- chances are you will find the rewards beyond compare.

CAT/HUMAN AGE CONVERSION

Cat Human

1	15
2	24
3	28
4	32
5	36
6	40
7	44
8	48
9	52
10	56
11	60
12	64
13	68
14	72
15	76
16	80
17	84
18	88
19	92
20	96



Silver, age 17, adopted at 7

30 Reasons to Adopt an Older Cat

1. The older they get, the more laptime they generally want.
2. Older cats adjust better to new surroundings-- been there, done that!
3. They are usually very loving, and laid-back.
4. Older cats have a set personality, so you know what to expect.
5. They're litter-box trained.
6. They're calm.
7. Older cats have good manners.
8. They won't "taste test" everything.
9. No sprinting down the hall and crashing into doors, walls, people, or other pets.
10. They require less supervision.
11. They break fewer lamps.
12. Toilet paper is not a toy.
13. Older cats can focus and learn quickly.
14. They're good at giving and getting love.
15. They have a well-developed immune system and stronger stomach tolerance.
16. Older cats won't chew the electrical wires or computer cables.
17. They know what "no" means.
18. What you see is what you get.
19. They're instant companions.
20. They know that "hunt the toes" is just a game.
21. No running up your pant leg, or your drapes.
22. Nothing fazes them (vacuum? what vacuum?).
23. They eat less.
24. They leave you some time for yourself.
25. They won't unplug things just for fun.
26. Three a.m. is sleep time, not play time.
27. Older cats are full grown. No guessing how big they'll get or what they'll look like.
28. Older cats are agreeable friends; they ask no questions, pass no criticism.
29. They won't rip stuff up.
30. It might be their last chance.



Audrey, age 14, adopted at 5

The Kitty Corner

First, some good news: George (the kitty with pemphigus) is doing much better! The vet decided to try a half-dose of the Leukeran (the chemo drug that made him so sick and lethargic), and it seems to have worked. George recently had another pemphigus flareup, but it was very, very mild.

Now we are waiting to see what his cycle is (how long between flareups), and whether the half-dose of Leukeran will continue to work well.

This quarter we're looking at older cats. As anyone in animal rescue work will tell you, everyone wants young cats (usually kittens or adults no older than 2 or 3 years)--it's very difficult to adopt out older cats, especially cats over 10 years old. As you can see below, many of the older cats we get end up being adopted by our volunteers, although that doesn't happen in every case.

These days, cats have a much longer life span, due to better nutrition, better medical care, and more cats becoming indoor-only cats. Most well-cared-for cats are living well into their teens, and some even into their twenties. So if you adopt a kitty who is eight years old, he or she will likely live another 8-10 years.

Most people want to adopt young cats because "I don't want it to die on me in five years." To me, this seems backward. The adopter is saying "I want a cat who will be with me for 10 years," rather than asking "How can I help a cat in need?"

Or, as my husband likes to say, "It's not all about you." It's about the cat. How can you help the cat?

So if you're thinking about adopting a kitty, don't dismiss the older ones. They deserve a great life, too, and have a lot of love to give.

-- Jackie Fischer, president



Slinky

This is Slinky. She's curious, smart, and opinionated. She loves her humans (as long as they worship at her feet) and will tolerate a cat-friendly dog and maybe another cat, as long as she gets to be the foreman. She is very affectionate, but will let you know when Petting Hours are over (could be 8 seconds, could be 8 years). If you sit down, she will superglue herself to your lap (purring wildly). If you lie down, she will superglue herself to your chest (ditto). If you try to unglue her, she'll tell you her opinion about that. She's a diva, a princess, and a prima donna--charming but controlling.

Why is Slinky our Spotlight Cat? Well, Slinky likes to play-bite. It is one of her forms of communication. She never bites hard, never draws blood--it just means she's trying to tell you something, or she's just in a playful mood. Slinky needs someone who really understands cats. And she shouldn't be around young children, who might not understand that her bites are play-bites. She needs a human who can watch Slinky gnawing on their hand

and then say, "That's really great, are you done yet?"

Slinky is 2 years old, and has had all her shots and tests. If you're interested in Slinky, call ARCF at 503-284-8768 or visit our website at www.pdx-petadoption.org.

Our Older Kitties and Puppies!

Here's a look at the ages of some of the older animals our current volunteers have adopted:	PAM: 15, 7
	KATIE: 19, 17
	LEAH: 18, 10
	CHRIS: 15+,
	JAN: 20
	CARMA: 15, 10
	JACKIE: 17, 16, 15
	LORRAINE: 17, 16, 13, 10
	ERIN: 16

SUCCESS STORIES

Sunny

CARMA (ARCF volunteer):

A very nice woman named Rosalie lives in some apartments in SE Portland where the residents frequently move away and leave behind their cats. Sadly, that's not the least bit unusual. But Rosalie is a concerned citizen and a friend to animals. In the past year or two, she's asked ARCF for help finding new homes for many of these abandoned kitties. For many months, there were no cats roaming around the complex, and that was a relief to everyone.

Then one day last spring, Rosalie called us again to say a lovely calico had been left behind when someone moved away. She had become quite wary of being approached, but Rosalie was able to lure her into a carrier, and one of our volunteers went to pick her up. Of course our first step is always straight to the vet for a checkup and spay/neuter surgery, if needed. She had her vet visit and went to one of our foster homes (Chrisi's).

CHRISI (ARCF volunteer):

Sunny was extremely shy when Clair and Jim came to meet her. When they came into the room she climbed up the wall and crouched in the highest window sill. I got a chair to retrieve her and the poor girl had eyes like saucers when they tried to touch her. In spite of her terror they fell in love with her immediately and took turns sitting on the dining room floor with her, lights off, just talking to her for the longest time and not trying to touch her. Finally I got her out from under the table and put her in Jim's lap, and he petted her for quite awhile, and she decided she was going home with them. They absolutely love her; the three of them couldn't be happier. Sunny even goes camping with them in their travel trailer.

CLAIR (adoptive mom):

Sunny is our second ARCF kitty and she is fantastic. We were concerned we would not find another kitty as wonderful as Cho. When talking with Pam, she mentioned ARCF had just rescued a little calico we might like to meet. As soon as we saw her, we knew she was the one. Chrisi was so gracious in welcoming us into her home and helping introduce us to Sunny. Thank you for listening to us and taking the time to make sure we and Sunny were a good match. We just wanted you to know we love her. She is quite a character and loves to scatter pencils, paper clips, paper, toothbrushes and other small, moveable objects. She follows us around everywhere we go in the morning, talking to us the whole time. Most household noises are okay with her, but she hates the vacuum cleaner and attacks the cord. Visitors still make her nervous but she is getting better when people come over. When the doorbell rings, she growls like a dog and watches the door.

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Sunny

Although it has taken several months, she is finally comfortable around some men but really watches them. Her laser light is so special she will carry it around in her mouth and store it under the bed. She lets Jim shine it for her at night before we all go to bed. Often we just sit and watch her being busy, busy, busy. Thank you again for the wonderful work you do!

SUCCESS STORIES

Allie Cat

Allie Cat showed up on our neighbor's doorstep one very hot day last August, just two weeks after we lost our beloved kitty Lila to cancer. Her appearance was a complete mystery; we have lived in our close-knit neighborhood for over a decade, and had never seen her before. She was in pitiful condition: she was a fur-covered skeleton, her hair greasy and full of dirt, and her skin was a mess of scabs. She was meowing frantically, a sign that she had some strength left. We put her in a carrier with some water and canned food. She ate so fast that she was choking on every bite. She drank and drank, and then drank some more. We knew she needed medical attention, and Animal Rescue & Care Fund helped without hesitation (thank you, ARCF!).

At Allie's vet visit we learned that she was an elderly gal, and so thin that she weighed a mere five pounds. She was treated for fleas (the scabs were from a flea allergy) and worms, and the vet took some blood and urine samples to determine if her thinness was due to disease or just lack of food. When the test results came back, it was discovered that Allie had hyperthyroidism, which accounted for her inability to gain weight and her agitated meowing.

We put forth every effort to find the people who certainly must have been missing sweet Allie. We placed ads on internet lost-and-found sites and in the newspaper. We posted colored flyers throughout the neighborhood, walked door-to-door to houses and businesses, and talked to anyone we saw outside. Nobody recognized her, and we could find no reports of a lost cat that turned out to be a match.

Allie settled into our house while we tried to locate her family, and it wasn't long before we could not imagine life without her. She received radioiodine treatment to cure her thyroid condition, and soon reached a normal weight. The frantic meowing stopped, and now she greets us in her funny "little old lady" voice. She is the happiest cat we know--a perfect companion who came into our lives, out of the blue, when we needed her most.

-- Chrisi & Tom Badrick

Spay & Neuter Coupons

On request, we can provide coupons for spaying and neutering cats and dogs. These coupons make this procedure very affordable. Several good, full-service vets participate in this program. For coupons please call ARCF at 503-284-8768.

Remember: cats and dogs are fully sexually mature at the age of 6 months and can be safely spayed or neutered at that age.



Allie Cat before



Allie Cat after

ANIMAL PLACEMENT

In May, June, and July, we placed 15 cats in new loving, responsible homes. Our major expenses for those three months were:

Veterinary fees: \$14,187*
Advertising to find new homes: \$230
Food, special meds: \$338**
Newsletter "Animal Talk": \$757

*These expenses also include veterinary care for the dogs of Portland's homeless and a few emergency care visits. We also had expenses for several severely injured pets and some very sick ones.

**Most volunteers pay for food and litter for the animals they care for.

SUCCESS STORIES

T.J.

T.J. was a lost little boy. Somehow he ended up in the neighborhood of an ARCF volunteer when he was a year old. He had the cutest little tilt to his head and when he stopped to look at you, it seemed as if he was going to ask you a question



like, "How are you doing?" He would let some people pet the top of his head, but not others. We suspect he was intuitive as to who wanted to trap him and take him to the vet.

He hung around for a couple of months and was ever so elusive. The volunteer put a trap out and fixed it so that it would not shut. Then she started leaving treats in there hoping he would eventually feel at ease with the trap. She did this for a couple of weeks and then made an appointment with the vet, hoping that he would come along at the right time and set the trap. All went as planned and into the trap he went and he was finally caught.

At the same time that T.J. went into the trap, the volunteer got a phone call saying she needed to pick up another cat and take it to the same vet she had an appointment with. This cat's name was Abigale, and she'd had a litter of kittens. They were old enough to be weaned, so her people wanted to find her and them a good home. (Actually, they weren't her people, but she snuck into their house one night, found a comfy closet, and had her kittens there.)

Abigale spent a couple of days at the vet while she was spayed and gone over with a fine-tooth comb. T.J. had the same thorough treatment. Both T.J. and Abigale went back to be fostered at the house where T.J. first appeared, and they soon became fast friends.

The tilt of T.J.'s head turned out to be a mass growing up against the side of his ear and damaging a nerve involving his eye. Fortunately, a very skilled surgeon successfully removed the mass, and T.J.'s tilt did not worsen.

They were very lucky to be adopted by, Mary Lou, a retired nurse who looks after their every need. T.J. has developed an eye problem that he takes drops for twice a day so he couldn't be in better hands. Both cats rule the roost and give their mom lots of love and entertainment. We'll never know who is the luckiest. but they have all found each other.

-- Pam Brooks

Call for Volunteers

- We need people to check addresses of potential adopters.
- Be a foster home or "emergency" foster home. (An emergency home will have the animal for two weeks maximum.)
- Help us stuff envelopes (for the newsletter).

If you would like to volunteer, please call Pam at 503-284-8768.

Thank You to Judy Potts for the fresh catnip! And to Linda Hiem who sent us the name of a homeopathic vet for George.

In Memoriam

We were very sad to hear that Lydia, who lived with the Waters family, recently passed away. Our hearts go out to them; she was a beautiful, sweet cat.

We were also sad to hear that Barbara Hess lost two of her kitties, Doris & Bella. It's so hard to lose two so close together. We send good thoughts to her and her remaining cat, Boris and her new cat, Gemma.

Cat Trivia

When your cat is frightened, the hair will stand up fairly evenly all over its body. By contrast, when your cat threatens or is ready to attack, the hair will stand up only in a narrow band along the spine and tail. In either case, be careful handling a cat whose hair is standing up. They may react out of instinct and accidentally injure you.

Senior Pet Care

Just as the health care needs of humans change as we age, the same applies to pets. It's critical for pet owners to work closely with their veterinarian to devise a health plan that is best for their senior pet.

When does "senior" start?

So when is a pet considered a senior? Generally, smaller breeds of dogs live longer than larger breeds, and cats live longer than dogs. Beyond that, the life span will vary with each individual, and your veterinarian will be able to help you determine what stage of life your furry friend is in. Keep in mind that some small dog breeds may be considered senior at 10-13 years, while giant breeds are classified as seniors at ages as young as five. Your veterinarian is your best source for more information to determine when your pet reaches the golden years.

Senior health exams

Scheduling regular veterinary examinations is one of the most important steps pet owners can take to keep their pets in tip-top shape. When dogs and cats enter the senior years, these health examinations are more important than ever. Senior care, which starts with the regular veterinary exam, is needed to catch and delay the onset or progress of disease and for the early detection of problems such as organ failure and osteoarthritis.

AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association) recommends that healthy senior dogs and cats visit the veterinarian every six months for a complete exam and laboratory testing. Keep in mind that every year for a dog or cat equals five to seven human years.

During the senior health exam, your veterinarian will ask you a series of questions regarding any changes in your pet's activity and behavior. The veterinarian will also conduct a complete examination of all of your pet's body systems.

Laboratory testing

Veterinarians depend on laboratory results to help them understand the status of your pet's health. When your pet is healthy, laboratory tests provide a means to determine your pet's "baseline" values. When your pet is sick, the veterinarian can more easily determine whether or not your pet's lab values are abnormal by comparing the baseline values to the current values. Subtle changes in these laboratory test results, even in the outwardly healthy animal, may signal the presence of an underlying disease.

AAHA recommends the following tests:

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

This common test measures the number of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets in a sample of blood. The numbers and types of these cells give the veterinarian information needed to help diagnose anemia, infections, and leukemia. A complete blood count also helps your veterinarian monitor your pet's response to some treatments.

Blood-chemistry panel

Blood-chemistry panels measure electrolytes, enzymes, and chemical elements such as calcium and phosphorous. This information helps your veterinarian determine how various organs, such as the kidneys, pancreas, and liver, are currently functioning. The results of these tests help your veterinarian formulate an accurate diagnosis, prescribe proper therapy, and monitor the response to treatment. Further testing may be recommended based on the results of these tests.

Urinalysis

Laboratory analysis of urine is a tool used to detect the presence of one or more specific substances that normally do not appear in urine, such as protein, sugar, white blood cells, or blood. A measurement of the dilution or concentration of urine is also helpful in diagnosing diseases. Urinalysis can assist the veterinarian in the diagnosis of urinary tract infections, diabetes, dehydration, kidney problems and many other conditions.

Parasite evaluation

Microscopic examination of your pet's feces can provide information about many different kinds of diseases, such as difficulties with digestion, internal bleeding, and disorders of the pancreas. Most importantly, though, this test confirms the presence of intestinal parasites, such as roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, tapeworm, and giardia.

For cats, an additional routine blood test is recommended to check for hyperthyroidism, a common ailment in senior cats. Additionally, depending on your individual pet's condition and other factors, other tests and assessments might be recommended. These include heartworm tests; feline leukemia/feline immunodeficiency virus test in cats; blood pressure evaluation; urine protein evaluation; cultures; imaging such as xrays, ultrasound, and echocardiography; electrocardiography; and special ophthalmic evaluations. Additional tests become especially important in evaluating senior pets that show signs of sickness or are being prepared for anesthesia and surgery.

-- AAHA

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Fast Facts About Canine Influenza

It seemed to appear without warning. In late September 2005, TV news, newspapers, and the internet were full of stories about canine influenza, a new flu-like disease rumored to be sweeping the country. But how new is it, really? How did it develop? How is it spread? How is it treated? And are there precautions to lessen your pet's risk?

To answer, Healthypet.com compiled the most current information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and researchers in the field. This is an emerging issue in which new developments occur very quickly, so be sure to check the Healthypet.com website for updates.

How did canine influenza develop?

Canine influenza appears to be related to an influenza strain that affects horses. At some point, the virus mutated and the new strain made the leap from horses to dogs.

Was the first outbreak in September 2005?

No, canine influenza was diagnosed initially in 2004. Until this year, outbreaks seemed contained to greyhound racetracks and seemed to affect only racing dogs. According to a September 26, 2005, CDC media briefing, the first evidence of canine influenza in companion dogs was documented in spring 2005, when shelters, boarding facilities, humane societies, and veterinarians submitted samples from dogs suspected of carrying the disease.

Is my dog at risk?

Yes. All dogs are at risk. Canine influenza is a new disease for which there is currently no vaccine. All dogs are susceptible, and none are immune.

Is canine influenza fatal?

Usually not. Most dogs diagnosed with canine influenza experience a mild form of the disease. They usually suffer from a persistent cough that may last for as long as three weeks and may experience a yellowish nasal discharge that can be treated effectively with antibiotics.

Dogs that experience a stronger version of canine influenza frequently have a high fever and exhibit increased respiratory rates and other indications of pneumonia. Currently, antibiotics treat this form of the disease successfully in about 95 percent of the cases.

How is canine influenza spread?

At present, canine influenza appears to be an airborne disease, much like kennel cough (*Bordetella bronchiseptica*). Physical contact between dogs does not seem to be required.

Can I catch canine influenza from my dog?

To date, there are no documented cases of humans contracting canine influenza from dogs.

How do I protect my dog?

Until a vaccine is developed, there is no way to ensure your dog won't contract canine influenza. A good rule of thumb, however, is to assume that the greater the exposure your dog has to other dogs, the greater the chance of infection. If your dog socializes frequently with other dogs or is boarded at a kennel, the odds of exposure are greater than if your dog remains at home.

So I shouldn't take my dog to the groomer, doggie day care, the dog park, or a boarding facility?

That is a decision you need to make individually, balancing your needs and those of your animal with the potential risk.

During the CDC media briefing, pet owners were advised to take "reasonable precautions." For instance, if your pet exhibits signs of a respiratory illness, be sure to contact your veterinarian.

Also, use groomers, day care sites, and boarders you're familiar with and where you feel comfortable. You are entitled to ask about steps operators take to isolate any dogs that seem ill. Finally, you should remain advised of media notices about outbreaks in your area. Canine influenza may never appear in your community.

- continued on page 8

Dog Rescue



We've lost our dog coordinator, and it's been very difficult to find good foster homes for dogs, so we have had to suspend our dog program for awhile. Fortunately, there are many fine dog rescue groups in the Portland area. If you know of a dog who needs rescuing, call the Oregon Humane Society at 503-285-7722. OHS has a 96% adoption rate for dogs.



- Canine Influenza continued from page 7

What is the incubation period?

Approximately two to five days.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are very similar to kennel cough. The first indication is a cough that may last as long as three weeks in spite of treatment. An advisory issued by the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine warns that, "Most dogs have a soft, moist cough, while others have a dry cough similar to that induced by Bordetella bronchiseptica/parainfluenza virus infection. Many dogs have a low-grade fever and purulent [pus] nasal discharge that is likely a secondary infection that quickly resolves with a broad-spectrum, bactericidal antibiotic treatment."

What if I think my dog has canine influenza?

Contact your veterinarian immediately. Be sure to tell your veterinarian if your dog has been boarded, sent to the groomer, or involved in any social activities (dog park, etc.) within the last month. Remember, coughing may be an indication of any of a variety of diseases. Your veterinarian is best qualified to make the diagnosis.

Can my dog contract canine influenza at the veterinarian's office?

Any time your dog comes in contact with other dogs or uses a facility where other dogs are, there is risk. AAHA-accredited veterinarians have isolation

rooms and meet stringent standards for cleanliness--both of which make it less likely that your dog will be exposed. Ask your veterinarian if his is an AAHA-accredited practice and what steps they are taking to prevent the spread of canine influenza.

Is it safe to adopt a dog from a shelter?

Adopting a dog from a shelter is a wonderful way to acquire a pet. Be sure to take reasonable precautions, particularly if you have another dog at home.

- 1) Use shelter you're familiar with and you have confidence in.
- 2) Inquire about quarantine procedures. Ask if incoming animals are kept in a separate area during the quarantine period, and ask if the shelter avoids cross-traffic between new animals and the general population until the quarantine period ends.
- 3) Inspect the general population area for yourself when you walk through.
- 4) Ask if the shelter has experienced any cases of canine influenza--and ask how they were treated.
- 5) Ask if the shelter has acquired any animals from states or shelters that experienced an outbreak.

What if I have more than one dog and one contracts canine influenza?

Contact your veterinarian immediately. He or she can treat the ill pet and give you advice on caring for the pet that is symptom-free.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to be more interactive with our readers. Do you have comments, questions, problems, stories, advice? Have you found a new pet-related product that you love? Do your kids have a pet story they'd like to tell us? Let us know!

Email us at: arcf@pdx-petadoption.org

or write us at:
P.O. Box 14956,
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YES! I want to help

Animal Rescue & Care Fund depends entirely on your donations to help the animals. Our work includes rescue, medical aid, food and shelter, humane education, neutering/spaying, and more. All workers are volunteers.

Your contribution goes directly to help the animals. All contributions are tax-deductible.

I enclose _____ for humane work.

(\$35 sponsors a cat, but of course, we are grateful for any amount.)

Sponsors can receive a photo and a story about the cat.

I'm interested in receiving a story and a photo.

I'm interested in being a volunteer. Please contact me at _____.

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City, State, Zip _____

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