



Linnet Way
Brickhill
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK41 7HN
Tel: +(0)1234 261 839
E: info@acornhousevets.co.uk

Moving house with your cat

Moving house can be a stressful experience for many cats. The following suggestions should make things easier for yourself and your cat.

- Plan ahead – if you are moving into rented accommodation or are buying a flat check that there are no restrictions on keeping animals there. If you are unable to take your cat with you make alternative arrangements as soon as possible – ask friends and family if they know of anybody who could take on your cat or contact local re-homing charities. Ask at reception for a list of local charities.
- During the move it will probably be least traumatic for your cat to spend a few days in a good boarding cattery. This will prevent your cat being disturbed by the coming and going of people and furniture and will allow you to focus on the task of moving. A frightened cat may well run away and become lost at this stressful time.
- If you choose to place your cat in a cattery during the move ensure that you make a reservation well in advance, and that your cat is up to date with his vaccinations.
- If you decide against temporary boarding it will be necessary to confine your cat to a lockable shed or room as you pack up at your old house, and again at the new house as



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furniture is unloaded. Provide food, water, a litter tray and your cat's usual bed. It is wise to lock this room so that removal men cannot inadvertently open the door and allow your cat to escape.

- • If your cat is facing a long car journey feed only a light meal, or delay feeding until your cat reaches the new house.
- • Owners often request sedatives or tranquillisers for their cats prior to embarking upon a long car journey. By all means discuss this with your vet – however, in practice cats are often more disturbed by the loss of control they experience with these drugs than with the travel itself. In general, the use of these drugs is not recommended.
- • When you arrive in the new house place your cat in the safe room / shed that you have designated for them. Offer food and water, and then leave your cat in peace, locking the door to prevent accidental release as before.
- • It is a good idea to confine your cat to this room until the rest of the house is reasonably organised; this may take one or two days.
- • Once the furniture has been arranged in the new house gradually allow your cat the freedom of the house, remembering to keep windows closed and ensuring that there are always two doors closed between him and the outside world. If doors and windows have to be opened for any reason then return your cat to their room until they can be closed.



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- A three-week period of “house arrest” is recommended before allowing your cat to explore their new outdoor surroundings. Some cats require a longer period of restriction.
- When your cat first goes outside you can carry them around the garden, or fit a harness and lead until they become familiar with their surroundings. Allow them to wander alone for a few minutes at a time and make sure that you remain close by. Allowing your cat out just before the next meal time helps ensure that they will return quickly when they are hungry. Scattering your cat’s used litter on the soil near the back door is also said to help your cat find their way home.
- Ensure that your cat is wearing a collar with the new address and phone number before letting them out. We recommend using safely release collars as in some cases the elastic collars can become stretched around a limb if they get stuck somewhere and result in injury. We strongly recommend identichipping as this is a safe and permanent way to identify your cat. Remember to inform the central database of your new address.
- “Feliway” is a pheromone-based product designed to reduce anxiety in cats and develop a sense of security within the home. This may be particularly useful after moving your cat into a strange house. “Feliway” is available as a pump-spray, or a plug-in diffuser – ask at reception for details.



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