

INTRODUCING A NEW PET

CAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION • PET PARENT SERIES

Aim for safe, low-stress coexistence: not instant friendship.

START SLOW

Begin with separate spaces. Allow pets to adjust to each other's scent and sounds before supervised interaction. Let the most uncomfortable pet set the pace. Use secure barriers as needed. Introductions may take days or weeks.

PREVENT COMPETITION

- Feed separately and limit high-value items at first.
- Provide multiple food/water, resting, and toileting areas.
- Give cats vertical space and escape routes.
- For cats, aim for one litter box per cat + one extra, when practical.



INTRODUCE GRADUALLY

CAT + CAT: Start with scent, then visual contact through a barrier, followed by short supervised visits.

DOG + DOG: Use controlled, low-pressure introductions. Parallel walks may help. Supervise closely and separate around food or valued items.

DOG + CAT: Give the cat a dog-free safe area and escape routes. Keep the dog controlled and never allow chasing.

DON'T FORCE IT

Never force greetings, corner pets, punish warnings, or leave new pets together unsupervised.

Allow retreat, increase distance, and reward calm behavior.

WATCH FOR STRESS

Slow down or separate pets for:

Staring • freezing • stiff posture • hiding • growling • hissing • swatting • lunging • chasing • guarding • blocking resources

Never reach between fighting animals with your hands.

WHEN TO GET HELP

Contact your veterinarian for sudden behavior changes or persistent stress. Seek behavioral help for fighting, biting, escalating aggression, predatory behavior, or serious resource guarding.

References: 2024 AAFP Intercat Tension Guidelines; ASPCA behavior guidance.

Educational disclaimer: General educational information only. This handout does not diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any animal and does not replace examination or individualized advice from a licensed veterinarian. Identification, licensing, collar, and travel requirements may vary by location and circumstance. CAC Community Education: General pet-parent education only. Not a substitute for individualized advice from a licensed veterinarian.

