

Pet adoption checklist

Adopting from a shelter or rescue: what to ask, the papers to take home, getting ready for a home visit and the first days.

Every shelter and rescue has its own process. Ask about theirs, bring this list on adoption day, and take health questions to your vet.

The pet and the shelter

Pet's name	Species, breed or mix	Age
Shelter or rescue	Contact person	Phone or email
Microchip number	Adoption day	Adoption fee

Questions to ask the shelter or rescue

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| ☐ How did the pet come in: as a stray, or given up by an owner, and why? | ☐ How long has the pet been here or in a foster home? |
| ☐ Which vaccinations are up to date? Spayed or neutered? | ☐ Can I have the full medical records? Any ongoing conditions? |
| ☐ House trained or crate trained? What is the daily routine? | ☐ How is the pet with children, strangers and other animals? |
| ☐ Which cues does the pet know? How is the pet on a leash? | ☐ Any bite history, guarding of food or toys, or trouble being alone? |
| ☐ What does the fee cover: vaccines, spay or neuter, microchip, deworming? | ☐ What are the steps: application, interview, home visit, contract? |
| ☐ What happens if it doesn't work out? Do you take pets back? | ☐ Do you offer help afterwards, such as behavior support? |

What they told you

Answers to remember

Paperwork to take home

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| ☐ The adoption contract, signed, and your copy | ☐ Vaccination records and the medical history |
| ☐ Spay or neuter record, if it was done | ☐ Medicines the pet is on, with instructions |
| ☐ The microchip number and which registry it is with | ☐ Notes on behavior from the staff or the foster home |
| ☐ The return policy, and who to call with questions | |

Anything else the shelter gave you

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The microchip in your name

Registry	Registry phone or website	Your details registered on



Before the home visit or adoption day

- ☐ Your lease or building allows pets
 - ☐ House rules agreed: furniture, crate, rooms that are off-limits
 - ☐ Medicines sealed and out of reach, cleaners in a closed cabinet
 - ☐ Everyone at home, and your pets, ready to meet the new pet
 - ☐ A quiet room set up for a new cat
 - ☐ A photo ID, and proof of address if they ask
 - ☐ Who feeds and who walks, and when
 - ☐ Garbage out of the pet's reach
 - ☐ Your vet's name, if the rescue asks for a vet check
 - ☐ A carrier for the ride home (cats)

- ☐ Bring the pet home when you can be home for a few days
- ☐ A collar with an ID tag from the first day
- ☐ Microchip registered in your name, or one booked
- ☐ A new cat kept in one room at first; other pets met slowly
- ☐ Keep the first week quiet and the routine the same
- ☐ First vet check booked (for a dog, within a week)
- ☐ Spay or neuter booked, if it hasn't been done
- ☐ Patience: settling in can take days, months or longer

Vet clinic	Phone	Booked for
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Anything else to remember

