



## Bon Bon 301761: What to Expect

**Bon Bon is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Bon Bon is a sensitive, sweet girl who needs time to build trust and confidence with people. She has a history of being nervous with new people/places and will need time to acclimate to her new home. Once she knows she is safe, she is very sweet and enjoys receiving cheek and chin scratches. Bon Bon will do best in a quiet, calm home as the only pet.

Bon Bon was surrendered by her previous family due to the other cats in the home not accepting her. The other cats in the home would chase, stalk and attack Bon Bon which led to her spending most of her time hiding and on guard. The stress she endured in this home caused her to have Litterbox misuse, as she was too afraid to come out from hiding to use the litterbox. When she first arrived at the shelter, she was extremely fearful and avoidant of the staff. She would back away, cower and hide in her kennel. On the first day in the shelter, she bit a staff members arm when they attempted to pick her up and move her. This bite was due to fear from being handled in a new place with people she didn't know and not from aggression. Soon after arriving at the shelter, she exhibited signs of discomfort when using the litterbox. This included straining to urinate and yowling when attempting to empty her bladder. She was quickly diagnosed with FIC (Feline Idiopathic Cystitis). FIC is a term describing a group of clinical signs stemming from inflammation of the urinary bladder, including bloody urine (hematuria), straining to urinate, urinating in unusual places, licking of the genital region, crying out when urinating, and urinating more often. Idiopathic means "of unknown cause", and FIC acts as a catch-all term to categorize cases where no known cause for these signs is seen on diagnostics. Other conditions causing the above signs aside from FIC include urolithiasis (stones in the urinary tract), urinary tract infection, and urethral obstruction. We have performed several diagnostic tests to look for the cause of these signs and found no evidence of any of these problems.

Stress is the most important factor in development of FIC. Cats may feel stress even if we don't recognize it; even changes in food schedule, their home environment, weather, number of animals in the household, and daily routine can cause this to occur. There is unfortunately no way to predict how any individual cat will do with this condition. Many cats will completely clear their FIC when taken out of an environment that they find to be stressful or be entirely manageable simply with a special diet or behavioral medications.

This link provides more information on FIC: <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-lower-urinary-tract-disease#FLUTD>

As Bon Bon acclimated to the shelter environment, the FIC symptoms she displayed in the beginning dissipated over time. The decision was then made to place her in the Behavior Modification Program. This program would allow us to work with her on feeling more comfortable in a shelter environment and diminishing her fearful behavior. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, and more one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about her and help her thrive. Since being in BMOD, she has had no concerns with using the litterbox or any FIC flare ups.

When she first arrived in BMOD she would perch on her cat tower and observe the team as we moved around the space. We would sit in her kennel and calmly talk to her and offer slow eye blinks. Over time, she began to show relaxed body language and began rolling around on her cat perch and making biscuits in the air at us. She unfortunately came down with URI while in BMOD but was so good at allowing us to provide daily medications and treatments to help her overcome it. She is hesitant about hands approaching but does allow cheek or chin scratches once she knows you're her friend. When she's not in the mood with being pet, she'll gently back away or raise a paw as if to swat.

Bon Bon responds well to verbal encouragement, calm environments, and slow movements. She is a kitty that needs time to build trust and confidence with people, but once she knows you are her friend she is very sweet. She is not

overly active but will occasionally bat at a wand toy when we offer it to her. Due to Bon Bon's history of being bullied by other animals in her previous home, we feel it's best for her to be the only pet in her new home. She deserves to be pampered and loved like the beautiful queen she is.

### **Here's how to help Bon Bon during your first month together:**

**This step is crucial in helping Bon Bon acclimate to her new home. Confine Bon Bon to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Bon Bon with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure she cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to play with toys, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home.

**Spend time with Bon Bon in her room.** Don't force her out of her hiding spot. Instead, encourage her to come out on her own using happy talk, offering a Touch Tool, treats or toys. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing her to come out on her own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Bon Bon is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

**Continue to provide a safe space.** Even when Bon Bon has started exploring the rest of the house, give her a safe space that she can retreat to. When she is in her safe space, insist that guests leave her alone and try to ignore her yourself. That way, when she comes out, you can reward her bravery with your attention.

**No visitors (at first).** Allow Bon Bon time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Bon Bon the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Bon Bon seems curious or interested, have the new person toss her treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

**Practice crate training.** Leave her carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of her normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so she can go in and out on her own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten her. You can also clicker train her to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Bon Bon get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

**Visiting the vet:** Unless it's an emergency, give Bon Bon time to bond to you before taking her to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if she already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable. Patience will come in handy for you.

Patience will come in handy for you. Bon Bon is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets but she will bond with her new family. Getting to know her and watching her come out of her shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

### **We're here to help!**

We want Bon Bon to be successful in her new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Erika at [erikas@oregonhumane.org](mailto:erikas@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Services Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Bon Bon now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!