

# ZüriCats – Citizen Science Project

## Instructions for collecting cat fur and fecal samples

Please read this step-by-step guide carefully and follow it closely when collecting fur and fecal samples from your cat. This will help ensure standardized sample collection and the best possible sample quality - and, of course, make your cat proud!

### What is inside the sampling kit?



- A sampling kit containing all necessary materials will be sent to your address by post.



- The following items are included in each sampling kit:
  - 2 plastic ziplock bags
  - 2 pairs of gloves
  - 1 fecal sample collection tube
  - 1 date of sample collection card
  - 1 pencil



- Please use a pencil (provided) to write the unique **sample identification number** found on the fecal sample collection tube onto the collection date card (pencil markings are more resistant to humidity).



- Once you are ready to collect the samples, write the **date of collection** on the card using the provided pencil. Ideally, the fur and fecal samples should be collected on the same day. If collected on different days, please make sure to record the correct date for each.

## Fur sample collection

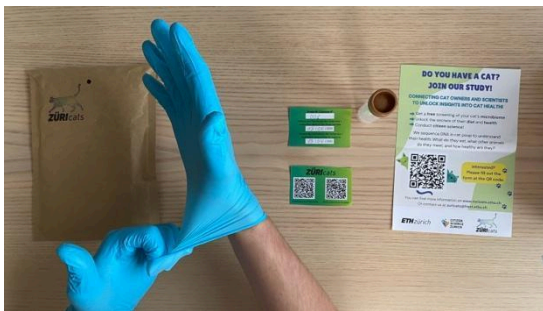
### Materials needed:



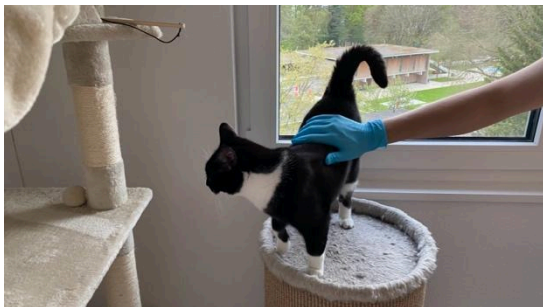
Materials you will need:

- 1 pair of gloves
- 1 ziplock bag

### Procedure:



- **Step 1:**  
Put on the pair of gloves.



- **Step 2:**  
Using your gloved hand, gently brush your cat to collect loose hair. **It is important that you only brush the back of the cat, from the neck down to the tail base.** To allow for consistent comparisons of stress hormone levels across cats, we kindly ask that you collect samples only from the back.



- **Note:**  
Hair collection is considered sufficient once the amount closely resembles the one shown in this “reference” image. Try to collect as much hair as possible - the more you can gather, the better (e.g., even x2, x4 times shown here)! If it is difficult to collect the desired amount, try brushing your cat's back with an ungloved hand.



## ● **Step 3:**

Remove the glove without losing any collected hair:

- Keep your gloved hand closed (fist) to hold the hair inside.
- With your other hand, pinch the outside of the glove near the wrist.



- Gently pull the glove off, turning it inside out as you go, so the hair stays contained within the glove.

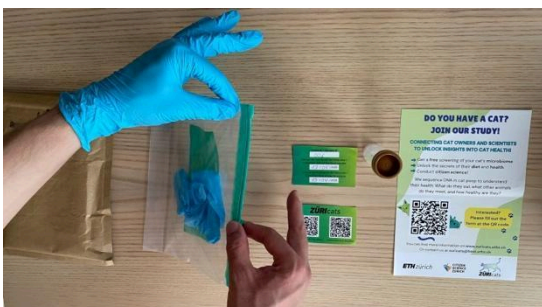


- Once the glove has partially covered your closed hand, open your fingers inside the glove to release any hair stuck to them.
- Continue pulling until the glove is fully off and inside out, with the hair securely enclosed inside the glove.



## ● **Step 4:**

Place the glove (now containing your cat's fur) into the provided ziplock bag and seal it securely.



## Storage and disposal:

- Dispose of the second (empty) glove in the household trash.
- Please store the sealed ziplock bag containing your cat's fur at room temperature, in a dry, dark place (e.g., a cupboard or closet). Keep the sample until it is collected by a member of the ZüriCats team for analysis.



## Fecal sample collection

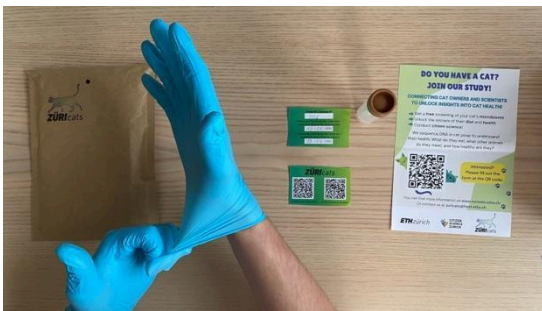
### Materials needed:



Materials you will need:

- 1 pair of gloves
- 1 sample collection tube
- 1 ziplock bag

### Procedure:



- **Step 1:**  
Put on the pair of gloves.



- **Note:**  
Locate a fresh fecal sample from your cat. Please note that it **must** be less than 1 hours old. To ensure optimal quality for downstream analyses, **it is critical to collect the sample as soon as possible after defecation.** If you are unsure, we recommend keeping the sampling kit nearby and waiting until you can collect a fresh sample.



- **Step 2:**  
Carefully open the lid of the fecal sample collection tube.



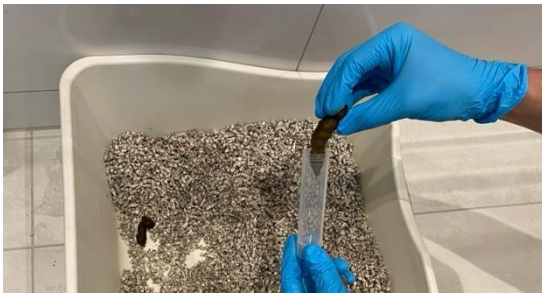
- **Step 3:**

The fecal sample collection tube is sterile, so to help keep it clean, we kindly ask that you place the lid with a scoop vertically on a clean surface, with the scoop facing upward to avoid contamination.



- **Step 4:**

Using your gloved hand, carefully collect all or most of fresh feces - a size of 3-4 cm is needed (please use these images as a reference).



- **Step 5:**

Use your gloved hand to carefully place the sample inside the collection tube. If possible, remove large pieces of litter or dirt from the feces before placing those into the tube. Small traces of litter or debris are acceptable and do not need to be removed.



- **Step 6:**

Place the fecal sample collection tube vertically on a clean surface to avoid contamination.



- **Step 7:**

Carefully remove the glove used to collect the fecal sample. Keep the gloved hand closed (fist) to contain any contamination. With your other gloved hand, pinch the rim of the glove at the wrist.



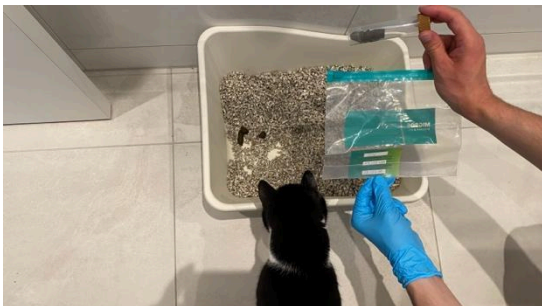
- Gently pull the glove off, turning it inside out to avoid contamination.



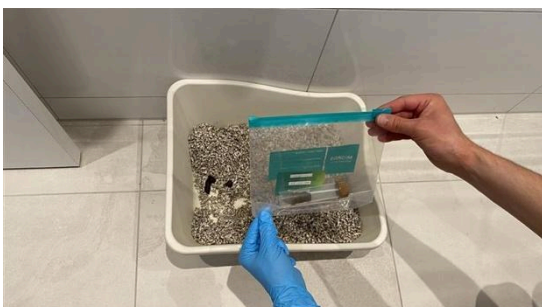
- When the glove is mostly covering your closed hand, open your fingers inside the glove to release any contact points.
- Continue pulling until the glove is fully off and inside out.



- **Step 8:**  
With your ungloved hand, carefully place the lid with a scoop back into the tube and screw the lid on tightly.



- **Step 9:**  
Place the closed fecal sample collection tube into the ziplock bag and seal it securely. Put the date of sample collection card with marked sampling date information into the ziplock bag with the fecal sample collection tube. That's it - you are all set!



## Storage and disposal:

- Discard both gloves in the household trash.
- Please store the sealed ziplock bag containing your cat's fecal sample in a freezer at -18 °C (standard home freezer temperature). It is critical to keep the fecal sample always frozen and sudden temperature changes. Keep the sample frozen until it is collected by a member of the ZüriCats team for analysis.