

There are many litter products available including odour controlled, crystallised, paper, wood pine and clumping. Talk to our staff about which is the most appropriate for your needs.

Health care

Kittens and cats have health care requirements throughout their lives.

These include:

- **Worming:** A kitten should be wormed every two weeks until 12 weeks of age and after that every three to four months for life.
- **De-fleaing:** Follow the instructions on your chosen flea product, but it is important to de-flea your cat throughout its life.
- **Vaccinations:** Talk to your vet regarding the vaccination requirements but generally they are:
 - 1st vaccination – eight to 10 weeks
 - 2nd vaccination – 12 to 14 weeks
 - Booster vaccinations – yearly.
- **De-sexing:** We strongly recommend that you spay or neuter your kitten. Talk to your vet regarding this.
- **Dental care:** Dental care is often overlooked in cats. Super premium food, dental treats and teeth cleaning go a long way in the care of your kitten's teeth from a very young age. Please note that cats cannot tolerate human toothpaste.
- **Grooming:** Long haired cats require regular grooming. Depending on the cat, this may be daily or weekly. Unattended coats can lead to skin problems.

Safety

Your kitten will have a tendency to get underfoot so just take care when he is very young. They also have a habit of getting into things such as cupboards, drawers and even washing machines! A little vigilance goes a long way at this stage of your kitten's life.

A kitten or cat collar should always be elasticised or quick release. Cats climbing trees can often snag their collars on branches and it is important that they are able to slip out of their collar if this situation arises.

Playtime

Kittens love to play, climb and scratch and these activities are all part of their natural behaviour patterns and important for their physical development.

Providing your kitten with a scratch post or scratch toy is a great idea. You can encourage your kitten to use its scratch post by spraying it with catnip spray and/or playing chase using a teaser. It is best to buy the largest scratch post or pad that you can afford as you really want your cat to scratch upwards in the natural scratching position. Praise him for using this scratch post.

If he starts to scratch your furniture discourage him by spritzing him with a spray bottle filled with water. This should only be used if you catch your kitten while exhibiting this behaviour, not afterwards.

Until your kitten is older don't let him have the run of the house when you are not there.

Cat doors

A cat door is a great way of giving your cat its freedom. Training a cat or kitten to use one is best done with patience and food!

Start by feeding your kitten near the cat door inside and then near the door outside. Leave the door open for a few days (or when your kitten or cat is in the area). You can do this by attaching a peg to the top of the flap when the flap is open.

Place your cat or kitten's food or a treat on the other side of the door so they can see it through the open door. Encourage him through.

Practice this and gradually lower the door so the kitten will get used to moving the cat door out of the way with his head and body.

This is a gradual process and forcing your kitten or cat through the door may result in life long phobias, so patience is key.

Kitten developmental stages

Birth to six weeks:

- This is a rapid growth period for a kitten
- They need to be with their mother during this time
- Their eyes will open, their sense of smell develops, teeth come in and ear canals will open
- Socialisation begins.

Seven weeks to 12 weeks:

- Socialisation and play are a big part of this period.

Three months to six months:

- Baby teeth are replaced with adult teeth
- Social ranking in your household will begin, if you have an older cat a challenge may arise
- Sexual maturity will begin.

Six months to 18 months:

- Further exploration of social ranking which may include challenging humans for dominance
- Kittens reach maturity and stop growing.

Kitten wish list

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cat bed | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowls for food and water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Super premium food | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys and teasers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collar with bell | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat door |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch post | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming gear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catnip spray | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about breed or care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter tray, liners, litter scoop & litter | <input type="checkbox"/> Harness and lead (optional). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea treatment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worm treatment | |

Kitten care guide



Animates

For the love of pets.

Choosing a cat needs careful consideration. You are about to make a commitment to a pet that will rely on you for all its basic needs for at least 10 years and sometimes longer.

These questions may help you to decide:

- Do all members of my family want a cat?
- What type of cat would I be comfortable caring for?
- What is my budget?
- Am I going to remain long term in this country?

Helping to choose a kitten

Consider these basics when choosing a kitten or cat:

Family members

Kittens, like all young creatures, are delicate and need to be handled with care. If you have very young children it may be better to look at an older kitten of four to five months rather than a very young kitten.

Types of cats

Cats do vary. These are a few considerations that you may want to take on board:

- Long haired cats – require daily or weekly grooming depending on the breed
- Purebreds or moggies – there are a great variety of cat breeds and they can exhibit specific traits whether it is their temperament, vocal volume or size. Talk to our staff about what breed may be the most appropriate for you and your family

Budget

There are certain financial considerations to recognise when you are thinking of adopting a cat:

- The initial cost of the kitten
- The de-sexing cost
- The ongoing veterinary costs including yearly check ups and vaccinations
- De-fleaing and worming treatments for the life of your cat
- Feeding costs
- Product costs.

Getting your new kitten home

You need to transport your cat in a carrier. Don't open the carrier until you are indoors and in the space where you want your kitten to be housed.

Prepare your house

Cats like a warm environment, so choose an appropriate area in your house.

- Set up a bed, water and food bowls, litter box and litter, a scratch post and toys
- The litter tray should be set up in a quiet area away from the cat's food
- Remove any precious objects from the area
- Remove electrical wires (cords for chewing)
- Place curtain cords out of reach
- Shut away other pets
- Make sure that your doors and windows are shut
- Ask your family members to be quiet and calm for your kitten's first foray into your house.

Leave the carrier door open and let your kitten come out on its own, rather than getting it out yourself.

Let your kitten explore in this safe environment.

You want your kitten's homecoming to be a positive experience. A gentle pat is fine, but this time is about letting your kitten explore and get used to his new surroundings. After a couple of days your kitten will be willing to explore the rest of the house.

After two weeks you can allow him brief, monitored visits into your garden. You can use a harness and lead for his first ventures if you wish. Allow him to slowly become accustomed to the big wide world, increasing the time outside and reducing the amount of supervision.

Keep your kitten inside for two weeks after getting him home and 10 days after his final vaccination.

Meeting the family

Children:

Never leave very young children alone with your kitten. Teach children how to pick up, hold and stroke your new kitten.

Cat to cat:

Let your kitten meet other pet members of your family gradually. If possible keep other pets away for the first few days. If you have another cat in the house don't allow his bowls or bedding to be moved or his routine to be too upset by the new arrival.

Expect some hissing and unfriendly behaviour initially and make sure that both pets have an escape route.

Reward calm behaviour and just be patient. Make sure that the older cat does not feel usurped by the younger model.

Cat to dog:

This is something that takes time. Have your dog on a lead and make sure that your kitten has a vantage point it can escape to.

If they seem to be acting well praise each pet and offer both a reward.

Be reassuring and patient.

Diet

If your kitten is already on a super premium kitten food it is best to keep them on this. If you wish to change your kitten's food you must do so over about five days. Gradually introduce the new food by mixing a little with his existing food. Over the following days gradually change the mix to favour the new food.

For example the first couple of days will be $\frac{3}{4}$ old and $\frac{1}{4}$ new food, the second couple of days $\frac{1}{2}$ old and $\frac{1}{2}$ new food and the final day $\frac{1}{4}$ old and $\frac{3}{4}$ new food.

We recommend that you feed your kitten a life stage specific super premium food. See the Nutrition Care Sheet for more information.

Litter box training

Cats are naturally clean and particular about their toileting. They like their privacy so it is important to place the litter box away from foot traffic and away from your kitten's food. Clean out the solid waste daily and the rest once or twice a week.