

**ANIMATES**

# The essential kitten guide.

First steps

Settling in

Feeding

Health

Behaviour

Grooming

Travelling

Caring

ANIMATES  
**ve+care**

# A new breed of pet store

everything for your kitten under one roof.



For all your kitten needs, think Animates.  
For more info, visit [animates.co.nz](http://animates.co.nz)



## Shop your way

- In-store
- Online



### Repeat Delivery

Have your favourite pet products delivered to your door when you need them!

# The ultimate guide to caring for your new kitten.

## 02

### First steps

- 02 The joys of a new kitten.
- 04 7 things you need to know before becoming a kitten parent.
- 06 Kitten's development.

## 08

### Settling in

- 08 10 things to do before bringing your kitten home.
- 10 Kitten checklist.
- 11 Getting started.
- 12 The essentials.

## 14

### Feeding

- 14 What should I feed my kitten?

## 16

### Health

- 16 Best of care.
- 18 Common health problems for kittens.
- 19 Kitten dental care.

## 20

### Behaviour

- 20 Helping your kitten to use litter.
- 22 What is my kitten saying?
- 23 Boredom busters for your kitten.
- 24 A guide to your kitten's instincts.

## 26

### Grooming

- 26 Keeping your kitten safe from parasites.
- 27 How to groom your kitten.

## 28

### Travelling

- 28 Car safety for your kitten.
- 29 Kittens on holidays.

## 30

### Caring

- 30 Kitty dilemmas.
- 32 Tech advances to streamline your's and your pet's life.
- 33 Bonus vouchers.
- 35 Kitten moments.





# How exciting! The joy of a new kitten.

The cuteness, the cuddles and so much love being sent your way.

You'll probably notice a change in how you do things, too.

You'll want to give your kitten the best life ever. Become the best parent possible, showing kindness, discipline, love and understanding every single day.

It's true, kittens make us better people.

In the following pages you'll find all you need to look after your new family member. These essentials are designed to make your new role easier and to keep your kitten happy and healthy for years to come.

#thepeteffect



# 7 things you need to know before becoming a kitten parent.



## Thinking of adopting a furry feline friend? Here's what you need to know before welcoming a kitten into your family.

### 1. Have you thought it through?

While cats can be fairly independent, they do require a level of care and maintenance, including regular veterinary check-ups and medical care, ongoing preventative parasite treatments, such as flea and worming control, appropriate nutrition and, in some cases, regular professional grooming. It's important to do your

research and understand the monetary investment and also the lifelong commitment to this new little family member.

### 2. Cats need their own space

Some cats are more social than others. Either way, it's important to ensure that their environment has their own space – somewhere they can retreat when they want some alone time. It's also good to

put their litter tray in a low-traffic area of the house as they need their privacy, too!

### 3. Felines are smart

Don't underestimate cats, they're a lot smarter than you think... and they will try to outsmart you if they get the chance! They have an innate ability to learn quickly, solve problems and adapt to their environments. This can often be incredible to watch as they use their smarts to navigate their lives around your home. That said, it can also get you into trouble at times.

### 4. Not all cats are the same

While some cats are lap-lovers, others like to be free agents and will genuinely be happy in their own company. While they will often come to you when they want affection, most cats are impressively individual and independent – doing what they want, when they want.

### 5. The power of playtime

Environmental enrichment is very important for our feline friends, particularly indoor cats. You'll need lots of fun toys to occupy them,

especially when you're not around. Interactive toys that allow you to get involved in playtime are also important and provide a balance of physical and mental stimulation that will help to avoid your kitten developing behavioural issues.

### 6. They scratch

Scratching is a natural behaviour and helps them keep their claws neat and tidy. In saying that, you're probably not going to bubble wrap your entire house so your best bet is to get a scratching post for your cat to play on and sharpen their claws, this will help to save your furniture.

### 7. Introduce other pets slowly

While cats adapt to new surroundings quickly, they don't always warm to other pets at quite the same pace. If you already have another pet, like a dog, you should know you can't force pets to like each other, so it's best to go slow in the introduction process. For animals, smells are far more important than appearances, so try getting your pets used to each other's scent before they meet face to face. Try swapping the blankets or beds they use before meeting.



## Kitten love

### New parent Sasha shares the joy of kitten parenthood.

I adopted Nala as a kitten. When I brought her home with me she cried a lot and was very shy, but she immediately stuck to my side. I was working from home at the time, so I was lucky enough to spend a lot of time with her as she settled in. After her initial timidity, she felt right at home and has managed to claw every piece of furniture in the house! I never knew I would be a cat person – she has changed my life for the better. She sleeps at the top of my pillow every night and starts pawing my face in the morning after 6am. While people think I am obsessive about her, she completes my day. I come home and she runs to the door – she makes my house a home.

# Your kitten's development.

Bringing a kitten into your home is an important and exciting milestone. It's only the first of many as your pet grows into an adult cat.



## Six to eight weeks

Kittens should have their first veterinary health check and the commencement of their vaccination program between six and eight weeks of age, which will help protect them from disease and illness. Kittens are usually fully weaned by eight weeks old, which is why they are not available for adoption until after this time.

At this time, a kitten will require their second vaccination. This is typically given between 10-12 weeks of age.

## Newborn

Kittens at this stage rely solely on their mother until they're three or four weeks old. A kitten at birth will weigh around 100 grams.



## Two to six weeks

A kitten's eyes will start to open and their sense of smell and hearing will improve. This is when an intestinal worming regime starts. They require worming every fortnight until 12 weeks of age, then monthly until six months old. Their first teeth start to come in.



## 14-16 weeks

At 14-16 weeks of age, your kitten can have their third booster vaccination. From here, your veterinarian, in consultation with you, will determine your feline friend's long-term vaccine program. The recommendations will be guided by your cat's lifestyle and environment.



## 12 months onwards

Your cat is now considered an adult! They'll need to switch to adult cat food to better suit their metabolism. They'll need:

- Adult cat food - we suggest to choose from our range of Superior Nutrition brands.
- New collar and bed, based on their growth.

## Six to 12 months

From month six onwards, your kitten is in an adolescence stage, which can last until they're 18 months old. You should be worming your kitten routinely every three months from this point onwards. This age is also an important milestone for desexing your kitten. All pets should be desexed between the ages of four and six months, as it has a range of benefits. They'll need:

- Flea and worming treatment
- Dental care essentials (see page 19)
- A trip to the vet. Find your nearest Animates Vetcare clinic at [animates.co.nz/vetcare](https://animates.co.nz/vetcare)

Feel free to chat to your local Animates team to find everything your kitten needs at every stage. Head to [animates.co.nz/articles](https://animates.co.nz/articles) to find more information on kittens.



## 10 to 12 weeks

Between 10-12 weeks most kittens will go off to their new home! See the Kitten Checklist on page 10 for all the items your kitten will need. Keep your kitten indoors for six weeks after you first get them home. Your kitten will start to come out of their shell and exhibit playful behaviour. This is the time that they require their second booster vaccination. Find your nearest Animates Vetcare clinic at [animates.co.nz/vetcare](https://animates.co.nz/vetcare)



Prepare your home for the arrival of your new kitten. Getting your home in order will make sure your kitten has a safe and secure environment.

# 10 things to do before bringing your kitten home.

## 1. Remove dangerous obstacles

Your kitten is a curious little pet who will want to play and explore. Your job is to make sure that dangerous items, such as cords, are out of harm's way.

## 2. Store chemicals securely

Make sure you store any dangerous chemicals such as bleach or floor cleaner out of your kitten's reach, as their curiosity can easily get them into a lot of trouble.

## 3. Organise their bed

Kittens spend a lot of time sleeping, up to 16 hours per day on average. All this rest helps with growth and development. It's essential that you provide a comfortable bed to snuggle in that's warm, cosy and safe.

## 4. Gather the toys

Kittens need lots of toys to play with as they are extremely active – have a variety of toys on hand to keep yours entertained.

## 5. Prepare your kids

If you have young children, it's really important to explain that they must be gentle with the new kitten. Children will want to snuggle and play. At first, this has to be limited as your kitten needs a lot of rest and may feel overwhelmed.

## 6. Find a good litter and tray

Litter is an essential on the

## Your kitten's first night

They may find it hard to settle in. To help, here are some tips:

- Set up a designated space for their bed – this may be the laundry.
- Make sure they can snuggle into blankets.
- Ensure they have access to water and their litter tray (not next to each other).
- Give them a bed to call their own.
- If your kitten cries overnight, ensure they have all necessities e.g. they are fed and warm. Settling in can be scary, take the time to comfort your kitten and be patient while they adjust.
- If your kitten is struggling to settle, you may want to consider a crate for them to sleep in.

kitten checklist and it's best that you find a litter and tray that your kitten is comfortable with sooner rather than later, so they can start using it. You may need to trial a number of varieties of litter before you find the best one for your kitten. Natural litter types such as paper, pine or clay are recommended.

## 7. Be ready for accidents

Kittens are very clean pets.

That said, they're bound to have the odd accident just like any other pet, so it's best to be prepared. Have cleaning products on hand that are pet-friendly, as it's the best way to avoid mishaps with chemicals.

## 8. Don't forget their food

Make sure you are well stocked with food and treats. Initially, keep your kitten on the food they were being fed prior to adoption. If you want to change your kitten's food, you should transition slowly. Make sure you look for food that's specially formulated for kittens. If you're not sure what's best consult your local Animates store or Animates Vetcare clinic. Treats are also important, as you can use them to reward your kitten for good behaviour.

## 9. A scratching post is a must

Scratching is a natural behaviour so you don't want to discourage it. Instead, reward them when they scratch in the right place. Have a scratching post in place from day one and make sure your kitten knows that it's okay to scratch away on it, rather than your furniture.

## 10. Pick up a carrier

A good kitten carrier is essential for getting your new kitten home and taking trips to the vet.

# Your kitten checklist.

Everything you need to prepare for the arrival of your new kitten.

## The essentials

- Food** – Superior Nutrition for your kitten's development. If your kitten isn't already eating Superior Nutrition food, introduce it to them slowly to avoid an upset tummy.
- Litter, litter liners, tray and scoop** – Talk to the team in-store for advice on what litter and tray is best for you and your kitten.
- Collar and ID tag** – Personalise your kitten's collar with their name and your contact details.
- Flea and worming treatments** – Talk to the team in-store for advice on the best treatment for your kitten.
- Carrier** – Essential for safe travelling with your kitten. Get them used to it from a young age.
- Bed** – Warm bed so they feel comfortable and safe.
- Scratch post** – Can help save your furniture and encourages your kitten to explore and play.
- Toys** – Kittens need toys for chase, play and to stimulate their minds.

## Useful items

- Bowls** – It's important for your kitten to have their own bowls away from other pets for stress free feeding. Also remember to keep their litter tray away from bowls.
- Cat door** – Once your kitten has settled in over 6 weeks or so, you can train them to use the cat door.
- Brushes and combs** – Keeps their skin and coat in good condition and prevents matting.
- Treats** – Reward good behaviour.
- Catnip** – Available in spray or dried form, this can encourage your cat to use their scratch post.
- Stain and odour remover** – For easy clean up of accidents.
- Microchipping** – Identifies your kitten so you can be contactable and they can make their way home.



Covering all your vet care needs – offering consultations, vaccinations, wellness programmes and laboratory testing.

## Cattery

Providing a comfortable and safe home away from home for your kitten.

Find your nearest clinic and cattery at [animates.co.nz/vetcare](http://animates.co.nz/vetcare)



**Kat Attack**  
Scratch post milford

**Trouble & Trix**  
Glamour puss brush

**Durapet**  
Stainless bowls and saucers

**Hill's Science Diet**  
Wet and dry kitten food

# Getting started.

Animates has everything you need to ensure your new family member is settled and happy.



**Mix & match**  
Cat toys

**Kong**  
Catnip spray

**Advantage**  
Flea treatment

**Playmate**  
Pet carrier

**Emerald Pet**  
Dental cat treats

**So phresh**  
Cat litter

**Aristotray**  
Litter tray and scoop

**Red dingo**  
Kitten collars with bell

Talk to your local Animates team to find everything your kitten needs, at every stage.

Products shown are indicative only, subject to change and may not be available at all stores.



# The essentials.

There are plenty of life-admin tasks you can put off for a few months, but the paperwork for your new kitten isn't one of them.



## Microchipping and registration

Microchips are a small device about the size of a grain of rice. They are implanted in the soft scruff of the neck by a veterinarian. They have a unique microchip number that when registered, links to your contact details. A microchipped and registered missing pet is three times more likely to get home when lost. Register your microchipped pets with the New Zealand Companion Animal Council, a not-for-profit lost pet database.

To find out more information visit [animalregister.co.nz](http://animalregister.co.nz)

## Pet Insurance

As your newest, small family member, your kitten will need a number of trips to the vet in his/her first year. Taking out pet insurance may save you on consultations, surgery and medicines.

90%

Of cat owners in New Zealand don't have pet insurance\*.

## Purebred kittens

If welcoming a new purebred kitten to your family, get to know their feline family tree. Breeders should come with papers that show they've been registered with the relevant breed association or club. Ask the breeder for the registration and vet records of your kitten's parents, including certificates showing they've been screened for common hereditary diseases.



\*Source: Companion Animals in New Zealand 2016, The New Zealand Companion Animal Council Inc.



## Your healthy pet checklist

Registered breeders, pet adoption centres and rescues will take care of a kitten's first vet health check, vaccination, flea and worm treatments, and microchip before they can go home with you.

Be sure to get a record of the vaccination and parasite prevention treatments so you know when to book your kitten in for their next dose. You'll also need copies for your kitten's first cattery vacation.



Supplied by  
ANIMATES  
**ve+care**



Visit [animates.co.nz](https://animates.co.nz) for more on feeding your kitten

# What should I feed my kitten?

Deciding what to feed your kitten is an important decision. Here's everything you need to know to ensure your kitten has a healthy and nutritionally balanced diet.

## Did you know?

Cats are obligate carnivores and require much more protein in their diets than dogs.

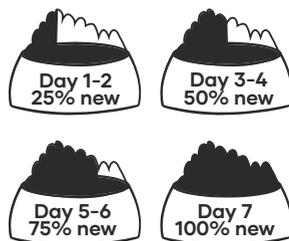
Kittens develop rapidly, both physically and mentally. You need Superior Nutrition to support this growth and help strengthen their immune system.

Choosing these foods will give your kitten the best possible start.

### When you first get your kitten

You shouldn't change your kitten's food in the first few days in their new home. Moving house and changing families is very stressful and can affect your kitten's digestive system. Keeping them on the diet they're used to will reduce the chance of stomach upsets or diarrhoea. When you are ready to change your kitten's diet, do so over the course of seven days, gradually introducing their new food mixed with the old one.

### Choosing their food



Check the range available and select a food marked as a "kitten" diet. These diets are specifically formulated to meet the needs of cats less than 12 months old. Be aware that the quality of the range will vary. In most instances, you will pay more for Superior Nutrition that contains the best-quality vitamin and mineral ingredients. They also include DHA, which is important for developing brain function. These foods contain real meat, such as chicken, as the first ingredient. As a rule, kittens should get about 30% of their energy from protein, so provide a diet that contains a quality source of protein. Check the label and look for a balance of real proteins, fats and oils, minerals, vitamins and carbohydrates. For advice on what food is best for your kitten, talk to your local Animates or Animates Vetcare team.

### Wet and dry mix-feeding

It's a great idea to offer both wet and dry food to ensure the best possible nutrition and to ensure proper hydration. If you decide to feed a mixture, ensure you convert the feeding requirements so you don't overfeed your pet.

### What about the cost?

You may think higher-quality

diets are expensive compared with other brands. Due to their high digestibility and high calorific density, your cat needs a smaller portion to meet their nutritional needs. When this fact is taken into

consideration and a cost per day is calculated, they compare favourably, especially when the quality of the ingredients and the benefits are factored in.

## Benefits of Superior Nutrition

A higher-quality diet is vitamin-rich, nutritionally dense with quality proteins, fats and carbohydrates for healthier cats that need less in their bowls (smaller serves) and leave less in the litter tray (less waste to clean up).

Choose from our range of Superior Nutrition brands at Animates or Animates Vetcare, including Hill's Science Diet kitten food (pictured), and your kitten will reap the rewards.

These include:

- Formulated for specific breeds, life stages and health conditions
- Quality ingredients
- No added artificial colours or flavour enhancers.
- DHA to enhance brain and nervous system development.
- Blend of vitamins and minerals for

- optimal health.
- Digestible ingredients that help avoid hairballs and lead to smaller, firmer and less-smelly waste.
- Promotes skin and coat health.
- Helps to support the best possible gut health
- Support for developing immune systems.
- Encourages strong joints and lean muscles.
- Wet foods optimise water intake for cats, which is vital for their urinary tract health.





**Did you know?**

Purring has healing powers. Scientists have discovered that the frequency of cats' purrs have the potential to promote healing in their owners.

# Best of care.

A healthy kitten is a happy one, so it's important to give them the best start to life. Here's everything you need to know about visiting the vet with your kitten.

**First steps**

It's recommended to take your kitten to your local Animates Vetcare or local vet within a week of bringing them home. The veterinarian will perform a full physical examination and discuss the best preventative healthcare plan with you, which will include your new kitten's vaccination schedule. Monitor your kitten's behaviour around the house before their first vet visit so that you can discuss any behaviour or health concerns that you may have. For tips on a safe trip to the vet, see page 28.

**Vaccinating your kitten**

Your kitten's vaccination schedule should begin between six and eight weeks of age. Kittens' immune systems are very susceptible to disease, which is why it is so important to safeguard them from potentially fatal diseases.

Vaccination schedule:

- **First vaccination** between 6-8 weeks old
- **Second vaccination** between 10-12 weeks old
- **Third booster** between 14-16 weeks old

Cats need booster vaccinations to ensure long-term immunity. Your veterinarian will recommend an ongoing plan for vaccinating your kitten based on their lifestyle

**You can reduce the risk of zoonotic disease by:**



Cleaning out litter trays regularly.



Disposing of faeces in the tray quickly.



Washing your cat's bed often.



Isolating unwell cats.



Washing your hands frequently and cleaning your children's hands after playing.



Wearing gloves when gardening in case of contact with faeces.

and environment. You will receive a vaccination card that helps log their vaccinations.

**Why your cat's health matters to you**

While it's not common for humans to catch diseases from cats, it can happen. These types of diseases are referred to as zoonotic diseases. Small children and pregnant women are more susceptible to the

transmission of disease from cats such as toxoplasmosis, due to their vulnerable immune systems. This is why parasite prevention and general hygiene is so important and why keeping your cat healthy keeps your family healthy. See page 26 for more info.

To find your local Animates Vetcare clinic, visit [animates.co.nz/vetcare](http://animates.co.nz/vetcare)

# Common health problems for kittens.

As kittens' immune systems are still developing and they've just moved homes, it's really important to watch out for any worrying symptoms.

Cats are good at hiding that they're unwell. This makes it difficult to tell when your furry friend is exhibiting any symptoms that you may need to be worried about. If your kitten is unwell, you may notice a lack of energy or a change in behaviour. What are the other signs you shouldn't ignore?

## Symptoms that can indicate your kitten is sick:

- Lethargy
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Sneezing
- Runny eyes and nasal inflammation
- Unable to defecate
- Trouble urinating
- Loss of appetite



**ve+care**

If you notice any of the symptoms above or anything out of the ordinary, speak with your local **Animates Vetcare** clinic to make an appointment. Seek treatment for your pet before it turns into something more serious.

Share pics of your kitten smiling on Instagram and tag #animatesnz



# Kitten dental care.

Just like people's teeth, cat's teeth need to be looked after to ensure they stay in tip-top condition. Here are some pointers for your kitten's best dental health.

As your kitten starts to settle in with you, they should start to become accustomed to having their mouth examined. This will help you maintain their dental hygiene and make it easier for the veterinarian to inspect their teeth further down the track. Once they are comfortable with this, you can put a plan in place.

## Look to their diet

Your kitten's Superior Nutrition dry food helps to protect their teeth from plaque and tartar. Over time, a diet of wet foods alone can lead to gingivitis and even loose teeth. This is why we recommend a mixed diet, as well as dental treats that have the seal of approval. Just be careful you're not overfeeding them.

## Brush their teeth

If brushing your kitten's teeth, you need to use a specific cat-friendly toothpaste. Using a chicken- or beef-flavoured option will help your kitten see brushing

as a reward. First, let them taste the toothpaste then, using a nice soft finger brush, gently rub the paste over their teeth. Start slowly and work your way up to brushing their teeth. Brushing every day is ideal for optimal health.

## Don't forget about their gums

Your kitten's gums should look pink and healthy, not irritated and sore. An important part of looking after your pet's teeth is to massage their gums to stimulate good oral health.

## Spotting dental problems in cats

If you see your kitten rubbing their mouth with their paws or licking their food rather than chewing, they may have a dental issue. You should also watch out for drooling, a sore mouth, sudden decreased appetite and bleeding gums.

## Dental health kit



C.E.T. Home Dental Kit



# Helping your kitten to use litter.

While kittens take to litter trays fairly intuitively, getting this right is important. Follow these six steps and your kitten will be using the litter tray in no time.

## 1. Find the right litter tray first up

You should look for a tray that's large enough for your kitten to move around in and one that they can climb into easily when it's time to go. Some kittens like more privacy, so you can also choose an enclosed litter tray.

## 2. Choose the best litter for you

Choosing the right litter for your kitten is just as important as the tray itself. Cat litter is available in a variety of materials and each have their pros and cons. Options vary from natural varieties, such as recycled paper or pine, which are the safest options for kittens to clay litter, which forms clumps when wet for easy removal, and crystal litter.

## 3. Find the right spot

Place the litter tray in a quiet spot out of the way of household traffic for privacy. The best place is in a corner of a room, away from their food and water bowl.

## 4. Control their space

When you bring your new kitten home, it's best to allocate your pet a smaller space like the laundry until they get used to their new home – this will also help with toilet training. It will also keep them close to the litter tray when they need to go and encourage them to use it.

## 5. Keep in mind

If you are introducing a new kitten into a home that already has a resident cat, you need to make sure that each of the cats have their own litter tray. This will help to prevent any unwanted

territorial behaviour and inappropriate urination in the long run.

## 6. Reinforce their good behaviour

If you want your kitten to quickly learn how to use their litter tray, you should get in the habit of physically placing them inside it when they first wake up in the morning, a few minutes after eating and drinking, and after play. Gently encourage them with your words, rather than raising your voice.



### Helpful hint

it's important to keep their litter tray clean and ready for them to use.

## Finding the best litter

### Pine litter

Pine litters are made from 100% sustainable wood in the form of shavings compressed into pellets. It is compostable, biodegradable and made from sustainable resources.

### Paper litter

Made of recycled paper, it is chemical-free and ultra-absorbent while suitable for composting.

### Crystal litter

These 100% silica crystals are non-clumping, long-lasting, lightweight, non-toxic and very absorbent. This is not recommended for young kittens in case it is ingested.

### Clay litter

This variety is available in both clumping and non-clumping varieties. Clumping clay cat litter is

highly absorbent, quickest to absorb moisture and most economical. Non-clumping litter avoids mess outside the tray while being absorbent and economical.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask a friendly **Animates** team member for advice on choosing the best litter for your cat.

### Did you know?

Cats have developed around 24 different vocalisations in order to communicate with us.

# What is my kitten saying?

While having a chat with your cat may sound far-fetched, it turns out you and your kitten have a language all of your own.

Kittens seem to pack a lot of personality into their tiny bodies! Your kitten will use a combination of vocalisations and body language to tell you what's going on in their world, it's just a matter of learning to interpret them.

### Cat talk

It's been established that kittens only use their "meow" to talk to their humans. They don't really use their voice

to communicate with other cats, except when fighting. Your kitten will use their voice to let you know what they need. When it comes to their body language, remember that not all cats are the same and to look at your cat's body language as a whole – that way, you won't take what they're trying to tell you out of context.



## Learning to decode kitten language

### I'm happy

- Tail extended straight up.
- Eyes half closed.
- Pupils narrowed.
- Purring.
- Whiskers naturally to the side.
- Kneading a soft surface.
- If their tail starts to quiver, don't think your cat's afraid or anxious, they are actually telling you that they're extremely content!

### I'm angry or irritated

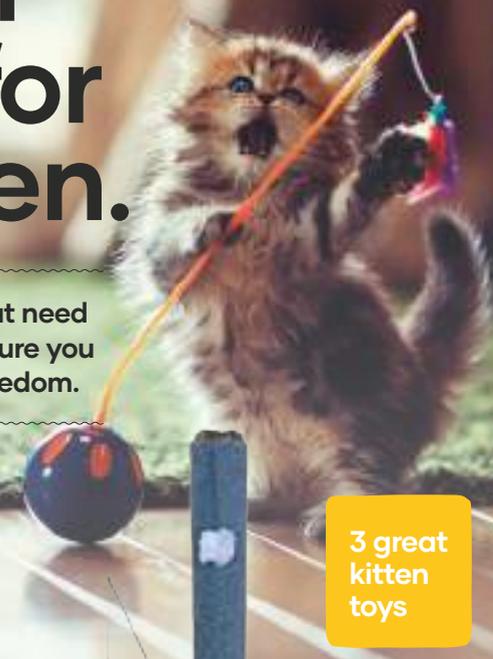
- Tail swishing rapidly.
- Ears flat on their head.
- Whiskers curled forward.
- Constricted pupils.

### I'm feeling defensive

- Rolling on their back and exposing their stomach (this can sometimes mean your cat is content. That said, if they extend their claws and bare their teeth, it usually means they're uncomfortable).
- Hissing or growling.
- Ears flat on their head.
- Tail between their legs (or a 'bushy' tail).
- Crouched down low to the ground.

# Boredom busters for your kitten.

Kittens are playful little things that need lots of mental stimulation. Make sure you offer them lots of toys to beat boredom.



### Play together

There are a number of toys on offer that will let you and your kitten play together. Teaser toys on a string and toys on a rope will involve you in the game and let you have heaps of fun with your kitten. This play time will help you bond with your new pet and establish a strong friendship.



Scratching post, teaser toy and mix & match toys

### Solo play

You'll want to give your kitten a range of toys that let them entertain themselves. Toys should be offered on a rotational basis, offer your kitten three or so at a time and swap them out on a regularly. This keeps toys 'new' and exciting. Balls, tunnels, and toy mice are just the start of the huge selection of toys on offer at Animates. You can even find electronic toys that will keep your kitten stimulated for hours. However, not all toys should be left unattended with kittens.

### Up to scratch

Providing your kitten with a scratch post or scratch toy is a great idea. You can encourage your kitten to use their scratch post by spraying the toy 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 be able to stretch out in a natural scratching position.

# A guide to your kitten's instincts.

Descended from wild cats, our domesticated kittens come with their fair share of personality quirks – it's only natural!

**Kneading is when a cat rhythmically alternates pushing their paws against a soft surface, such as the sofa, a rug or your lap.**

Kneading is one of your kitten's more peculiar behaviours that actually serves a number of important purposes for cats. Kneading begins virtually from day one, when a kitten kneads their mother's teats to help stimulate milk production. While behaviour experts aren't entirely certain what drives cats to knead beyond kittenhood, it's widely thought they instinctively associate massaging a soft surface with the cosy comfort of a mother's nurturing. Some adult cats even lick or suckle the surface they're kneading. The belief is that kneading is both an expression of contentment and a self-soothing mechanism. Cats are thought to knead to help themselves relax and unwind.

Why do cats knead?

Why do cats mark their territory?

**Kittens make themselves at home by marking territory.**

You may see them rubbing their face and body repeatedly against your legs, walls, flooring and furniture to spread their scent. If a kitten is having trouble settling in, they may begin marking territory with urine instead of using the litter box. Kittens may be more likely to do this if they're feeling anxious.

Why do cats purr?

It is generally accepted that purring is an emotional response for cats. A cat's purr is one of the tools they use to express their feelings, particularly when they are feeling relaxed and happy. Cats also purr when they're distressed, afraid or in pain, and even when giving birth, so it could be a self-soothing behaviour rather than exclusively a show of contentment. It's probably a means of communication, too. Purring starts when kittens are just a few days old, leading some to speculate they're "talking" to their mother and encouraging her to feed them.

**Scratching and kneading is normal behaviour cats have inherited from their wild ancestors.**

You can manage your cat's scratching and kneading by enriching their environment with accessories and toys. When our nails get too long we clip them with a nail clipper – a cat can't do that. The feline solution for nails that are too long is to start scratching on something, as this is natural cat behaviour. The act of scratching removes the old nails and allows the new ones to emerge. To help protect your furniture, your cat will need a scratching post. Make sure it's tall enough for them to stand up on their hind legs with a sturdy base so it won't fall over. Ensure it's covered in a tactile material, like carpet or sisal, there are even options with platforms and hidey-holes for play. Remember: the more fun you make it, the better chance it'll be used for scratching, rather than your couch!

Why do cats scratch?

If you're worried about your kitten's behaviour, visit your nearest **Animates Vetcare** clinic or see your local vet.

# Keeping your kitten safe from parasites.

Kittens are susceptible to fleas and worms. The good news is that they can be treated and often prevented.

## Fleas

While we normally associate warmer weather with fleas, these parasites are resilient all year-round. If you don't treat your pet with parasite prevention regularly, they are at higher risk of health problems associated with pesky parasites. The flea lifecycle can be difficult to beat. Flea eggs go from larvae to pupae stage and will stay present in your kitten's fur and environment (including bedding and toys), waiting for the ideal temperature to hatch. Maintaining year-round flea prevention will help to avoid an infestation during peak seasons.

## Worms

Worms are nasty parasites that can affect kittens and some worms can be transmitted to humans. Symptoms that may identify that your kitten has worms include weight loss, diarrhoea, weakness and an enlarged stomach. Kittens should be wormed every two weeks until 12 weeks old, then monthly until six months old, and every three months following that. However always refer to the leaflet provided with your treatment for recommended dosage and treatment intervals. Ringworm is also a concern. It is not a worm, but a fungus on the skin that can be contagious to humans.

## How can I prevent parasites?

Over-the-counter prevention can be administered as a tablet, spot-on or spray. These products have unique benefits with some providing protection from more than one parasite including fleas and intestinal worms. Some brands are safe to use on kittens from four weeks of age and will protect your cat from a range of parasites. Be sure to check on the packet though.

## Flea and worm solutions

Visit your local Animates store, for all the flea and worm requirements for your kitten.

— Supplied by —  
**vet+care**

If you have any concerns about your kitten's health, visit your **Animates Vetcare** clinic or see your local vet.

# How to groom your kitten.

While cats are superb self-groomers, regular brushing by you will keep your kitten's coat extra shiny and healthy.

## Starting slow

Regular grooming is important for maintaining your cat's health. Most cats love to be brushed, especially if this is a habit that's developed from an early age. Make sure your kitten feels comfortable being patted all over and is slowly introduced to their combs and brushes. Keep your first grooming sessions short – only five to ten minutes – then gradually increase the time until your pet is used to the routine.

## Grooming basics

Grooming your kitten depends on their coat and whether they have long or shorter hair. For long-haired cats, we recommend brushing every day. Short-haired breeds may benefit

from being brushed once a week. Consistent brushing stops their hair from matting, removes loose fur and reduces the risk of irritating hair balls caused by excessive self-grooming. For the best results, use a comb first and work it from front to back within the line of fur. Loose fur can then be removed with a slicker brush or a rubber mitt.

## Can you give your kitten a bath?

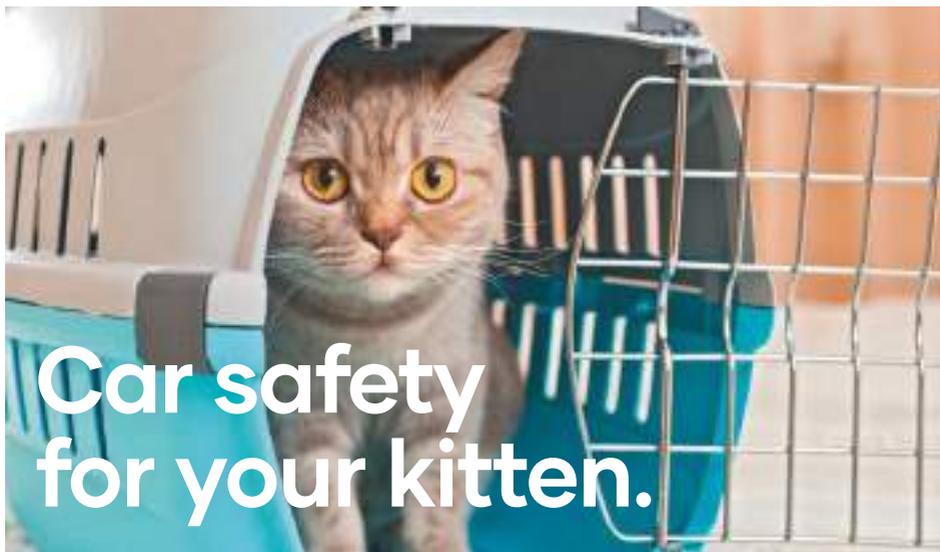
We do not recommend to bath your kitten as it can remove essential oils. It is generally, only necessary if your kitten is muddy or if recommended by a vet. If you do need to wash your kitten, make sure you use a shampoo specially

formulated for cats – not dog shampoo, human shampoo or other soaps, as these can contain ingredients that can be harmful to cats.

## Your kitten's nails

Clipping the nails of kittens and cats that go outside is not recommended as it leaves them unable to climb trees, get away from danger or protect themselves. Having a scratch post will help the nails stay in good condition and prevent them getting overgrown.

If you feel unsure, ask your **Animates Vetcare** clinic or see your local vet for advice on clipping your kitten's nails.



# Car safety for your kitten.

While you may not be planning to take your kitten for lots of road trips, it's important to make them comfortable to maximise their safety when they are in the car.

The first step to your kitten's car safety is their cat carrier. You'll need to take your kitten to the vet regularly, so you need to ensure your kitten is comfortable with the experience and

most importantly, safe during the commute. Your kitten's carrier can be seen as a place of refuge by them, so make sure their first introduction to it is as anxiety-free as possible.

## Feliway spray

Feliway uses a special scent that is a replication of the pheromone cats leave naturally when they are feeling comfortable in their environment. This scent is odourless to people and other animals and will help to keep your cat calm during car trips.



## Tips for a stress-free car journey

- Line the carrier with something soft like a towel or bed.
- Feliway spray the carrier prior to putting your cat in to alleviate stress.
- Bring some treats to reward good behaviour.
- If your cat does not spontaneously enter the carrier, calmly place them into the carrier through the opening.
- Secure the carrier on the back seat of your car with the seatbelt, or against the front seat, and cover it with a towel.
- Drive smoothly, without loud music, talking to your cat in a soothing voice; the calmer you are the less anxious your cat will be. If possible, keep windows closed for extra safety.
- If your cat is reluctant, wrap them gently in a towel that has their scent or Feliway spray on it.

# Kittens on holidays.

As much as you love your kitten, there will come a time when you have to go away and leave them behind. There are lots of options so you can have peace of mind on your trip.

## Use a boarding cattery or vet

A boarding cattery is a facility that looks after cats when their parents cannot. There are catteries in all major cities and towns, and many vet clinics, such as Animates Vetcare, also offer cat boarding services. The main advantage of boarding your cat with a vet is that there are experienced medical staff

on hand should they become ill. Boarding catteries tend to offer larger quarters, as well as extras like enclosed outdoor play areas, though costs are likely to rise along with the degree of luxury.

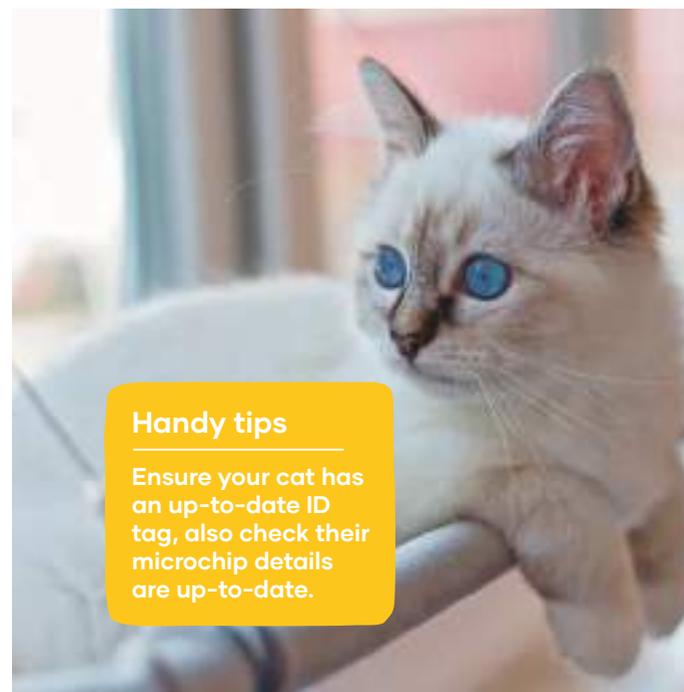
## Use a professional cat-sitter

The next best thing to you being at home is hiring a

professional pet minder, or cat-sitter, to either stay with your cat for the duration of your holiday, or visit every day. The great thing about having someone care for your cat in your own home is that they won't be stressed out by being taken away from their usual environment.

## Ask a friend

If cost is a factor, you could consider asking a trusted friend, neighbour or family member to mind your cat while you're away. Ideally, ask someone who is able to stay at your place and maintain your pet's normal diet and routine. If your cat will need to go to a different house, check that it's escape-proof and take lots of home comforts to help them settle in, such as familiar toys or a crate or cat carrier they can retreat to if they're feeling overwhelmed.



## Handy tips

Ensure your cat has an up-to-date ID tag, also check their microchip details are up-to-date.

To find your nearest Animates Vetcare Cattery visit [animates.co.nz/vetcare/vet-services/cattery](https://animates.co.nz/vetcare/vet-services/cattery)

# Kitty dilemmas.

Bringing a kitten into your home is a big step and you'll be faced with the odd challenge. Here are some kitten-related frequently asked questions.



## Did you know?

Cats aren't just remarkable because of their quirky personalities – each cat's nose has a unique pattern, similar to a human fingerprint.

## Why do cats sleep so much?

Cats seem to spend their entire days sleeping, most likely after pouncing on your chest at the crack of dawn. The average cat naps for 15 hours a day, with kittens and older cats sleeping even longer. So why does your pet keep such strange hours? Cats may not spend a lot of time awake, yet when they do, they use lots of energy. Whether they're stalking a bird, chasing string or using their scratcher, your cat exerts a lot of energy in short bursts. This means they need recovery time.

## Why do cats bring you dead things?

Domesticated cats have retained their wild hunting instincts and it's impossible to take them away. When your cat brings a mouse or a bird and presents it to you, they are demonstrating their natural survival instinct to hunt. The best way to curb this behaviour is to stimulate their natural hunting habits. By giving them plenty of toys and indoor play activities, such as balls, wands, automatic interactive toys and plenty of opportunities for climbing and scratching you'll be keeping them entertained, making them less likely to turn their attention elsewhere.

## Are cats nocturnal?

A lot of people believe that cats are nocturnal, or active



during the night and asleep during the day. This is not strictly true. In fact, the majority of domestic cats are most active at both dusk and dawn rather than only at night. Because of this, cats laze around during the day, particularly when the sun is at its hottest, and are most active in the early morning and in the early evening hours of twilight. Whereas big cats in the wild, from which our domestic feline companions descend (lions, tigers etc.), are typically nocturnal hunters. So, if your cat is displaying nocturnal characteristics, it means they're channelling their inner lion!

## Why do cats hate water?

For an animal so adamant on being clean, it's a wonder that most cats don't like water. While many cats explore their water bowls with their paws, and become curiously bewitched around dripping faucets and showers, most don't appreciate being wholly drenched in water. While there are a few reasons for this, the main one

comes down to their body temperature – once wet, they find it hard to feel warm again.

## How long do cats live?

Contrary to the popular saying, cats don't have nine lives. Their lives are getting longer though. A cat is considered senior at nine years of age. Thanks to nutritional and medical advances, it's not uncommon for cats to live beyond the standard lifespan of 12 to 15 years of age. Animates Vetcare has had feline patients as old as 21 years of age. By taking good care of your pet's health, you can increase their chances of living to a ripe old age. Providing your cat with a Superior Nutrition diet is important for maintaining a healthy weight and delivering the nutrients they need. You can help ward off life-threatening illnesses with regular trips to your local Animates Vetcare for all your pet's vaccinations, boosters and general check-ups.

# Tech advances to streamline your's and your pet's life.

Technology has come a long way! Us humans have enjoyed some pretty incredible advances and the pet world is no different. Here are some top tech buys for kittens.

## Interactive cat toys

To keep your cat entertained, you can find a huge variety of amazing electronic toys. The Frolicat Bolt toy is an interactive laser light that provides hours of fun. Simply hold Bolt in your hand or place it on a flat surface. Turn it on and watch your cat pounce, chase, and bat at the laser patterns!



## Electronic feeders

Motion-activated bowls help keep smells locked away and flies off. The Surefeed Sealed Pet Bowl opens when it detects your pet using motion sensors. This keeps the food fresher and prevents wet food from drying out, making it more palatable for your kitten.



## Microchip cat flaps

Keep your home secure with a cat door that only opens when it registers your pet's microchip - no stray cats can sneak inside! A SureFlap Pet Door Connect & Hub takes that a step further. The latest technology works with an app that can also be operated remotely. Settings can be adjusted to lock or unlock the pet door anytime. You can also know when your kitten is at home and monitor long-term activity.



## ANIMATES

20% off

Superior Nutrition dry kitten food

## ANIMATES

20% off

Kitten wet food

## ANIMATES

20% off

One cat item of choice

Excluding food and flea treatments

## ANIMATES

10% off

One cat item of choice

Excluding food and flea treatments

## ANIMATES

10% off

Flea or worm treatment



To find your local Animates store visit [animates.co.nz](https://animates.co.nz)

### 20% off kitten wet food

Offer valid from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020. Retail sales only. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks, customer orders or lay-bys. Not transferrable for cash. One voucher per person. One time use only. Includes Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin, Wellness, Wellness Core, Dine and Fancy Feast kitten food. Present voucher on redemption.

animates.co.nz checkout code: KITTENWET

Store to use - LS Processing:



5090682241230

### 20% off Superior Nutrition dry kitten food

Offer valid from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020. Retail sales only. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks, customer orders or lay-bys. Not transferrable for cash. One voucher per person. One time use only. Includes Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin, Pro Plan, Nutro, Wellness, Holistic Select, Nutrience Infusion, Nutrience Grain-Free and Black Hawk Grain-Free. Present voucher on redemption.

animates.co.nz checkout code: KITTENSUP

Store to use - LS Processing:



5090680578437

### 10% off one cat item of choice

Offer valid from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020 on a cat product only. Retail sales only. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks, customer orders or lay-bys. Not transferrable for cash. One voucher per person. One time use only. Excludes food and flea treatments. Excludes pets, services and gift vouchers. Present voucher on redemption.

animates.co.nz checkout code: KITTEN10

Store to use - LS Processing:



5090678102347

### 20% off one cat item of choice

Offer valid from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020 on a cat product only. Retail sales only. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks, customer orders or lay-bys. Not transferrable for cash. One voucher per person. One time use only. Excludes food and flea treatments. Excludes pets, services and gift vouchers. Present voucher on redemption.

animates.co.nz checkout code: KITTEN20

Store to use - LS Processing:



5090681589746

### 10% off flea and worm treatment

Offer valid from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020. Retail sales only. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks, customer orders or lay-bys. Not transferrable for cash. One voucher per person. One time use only. Veterinary products supplied by Animates Vetcare. Present voucher on redemption.

animates.co.nz checkout code: KITTENFLEA

Store to use - LS Processing:



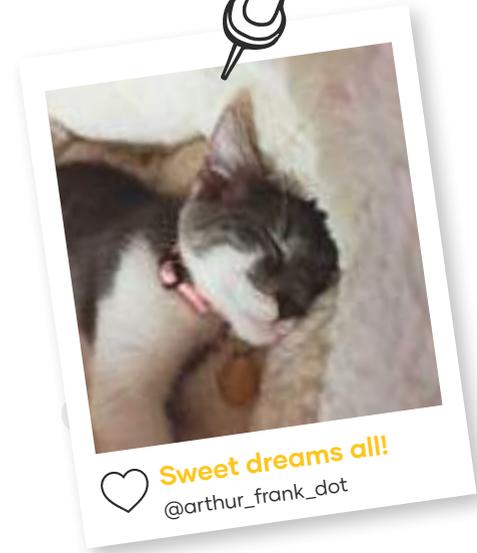
5090679989893



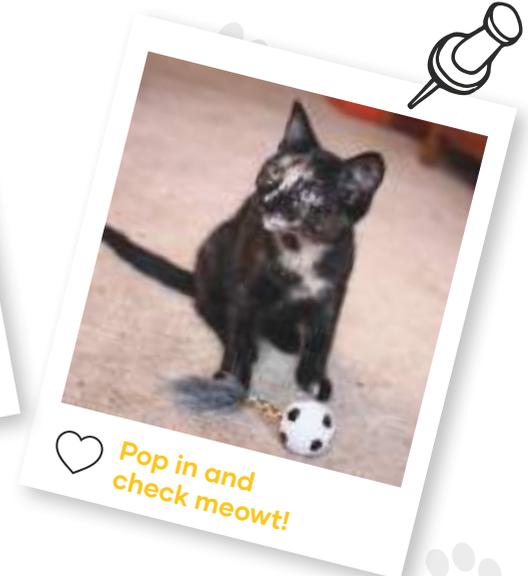
To find your local Animates store visit [animates.co.nz](http://animates.co.nz)

We love seeing your kitten pics! Here are some of our favourites from Instagram.

# Purr-fect kitten moments.



Share your precious kittens with us by tagging @animatesnz and #animatesnz in your caption.



'Like' us on Facebook for more cute kitten pics, competitions and upcoming events.



[animates.co.nz](https://animates.co.nz)



**Nutrition | Advice**

[animates.co.nz/vetcare](https://animates.co.nz/vetcare)



**Vetcare | Cattery**