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Kitten Care Guide

First steps

Settling in

Feeding

Health

Behaviour

Grooming

Travelling

Caring

Little 
MATES

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kitten essentials
inside!

A new breed of pet store

Everything for your kitten under one roof.



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The ultimate guide to caring for your kitten.

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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.

Kittens enrich our lives and provide us with unconditional love.

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.

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Questions to ask before getting a kitten.



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. Cats have a natural instinct to be in high places, so it's important to provide enough high spaces for your kitten to retreat to. 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.

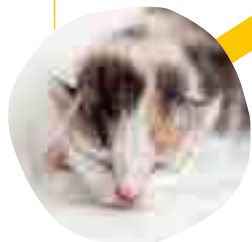


Six to eight weeks

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.

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 and will begin to purr.



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. Their first teeth start to come in and they begin walking. It is important to start human socialisation from 2 weeks.



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.

Your kitten will need a few trips to the vet in their first year. Find your nearest Animates Vetcare clinic at animates.co.nz/vetcare



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 you choose from our range of science-led nutrition brands.
- **New collar and bed**, based on their growth.

Six to 12 months

From month six onwards, your kitten is in their youth stage, which can last until they're 18 months old. You should be worming your kitten routinely every three months from this point onwards. **They'll need:**

- **Flea and worming treatment**
- **Dental care essentials** (see page 19)

Feel free to chat to your local Animates team to find everything your kitten needs at every stage. Head to animates.co.nz/articles to find more information.

17 to 26 weeks

This age is an important milestone for desexing your kitten. It is recommended that all pet should be desexed between the ages of four and six months, as it has a range of benefits. They will also require worming monthly until six months old.

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.

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



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, and household medications such as paracetamol, 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 in a quiet,

low traffic area, 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 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 toilet 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.

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.

Z Z Z



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 'hide hole' type bed or open box for them to sleep in.

Your kitten checklist.

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

The essentials

- **Food** – Science-led nutrition for your kitten's development. If changing your kitten's diet, introduce the new food 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.
- **Microchipping** – Identifies your kitten and links to your contact details in case they get lost.
- **Vaccinations** – Book in for the vaccinations your kitten will need.

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.
- **No Scratch Spray** – Helps protect furniture, curtains and carpets from clawing and scratching.

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vetcare+

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

 **Cattery**

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

Find your nearest clinic and cattery at animates.co.nz/vetcare

Feather Teaser
50cm



Trouble & Trix
Leo wave cat scratcher



Trouble & Trix
Glamourpuss brush



Durapet
Stainless bowls and saucers



Royal Canin
Wet and dry kitten food

Getting started.

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



Mix & match
Cat toys

Kong
Catnip spray



Aristotray
Litter tray and scoop



Trouble & Trix
Cat litter



Advantage
Flea treatment



Brooklands
Cat carrier



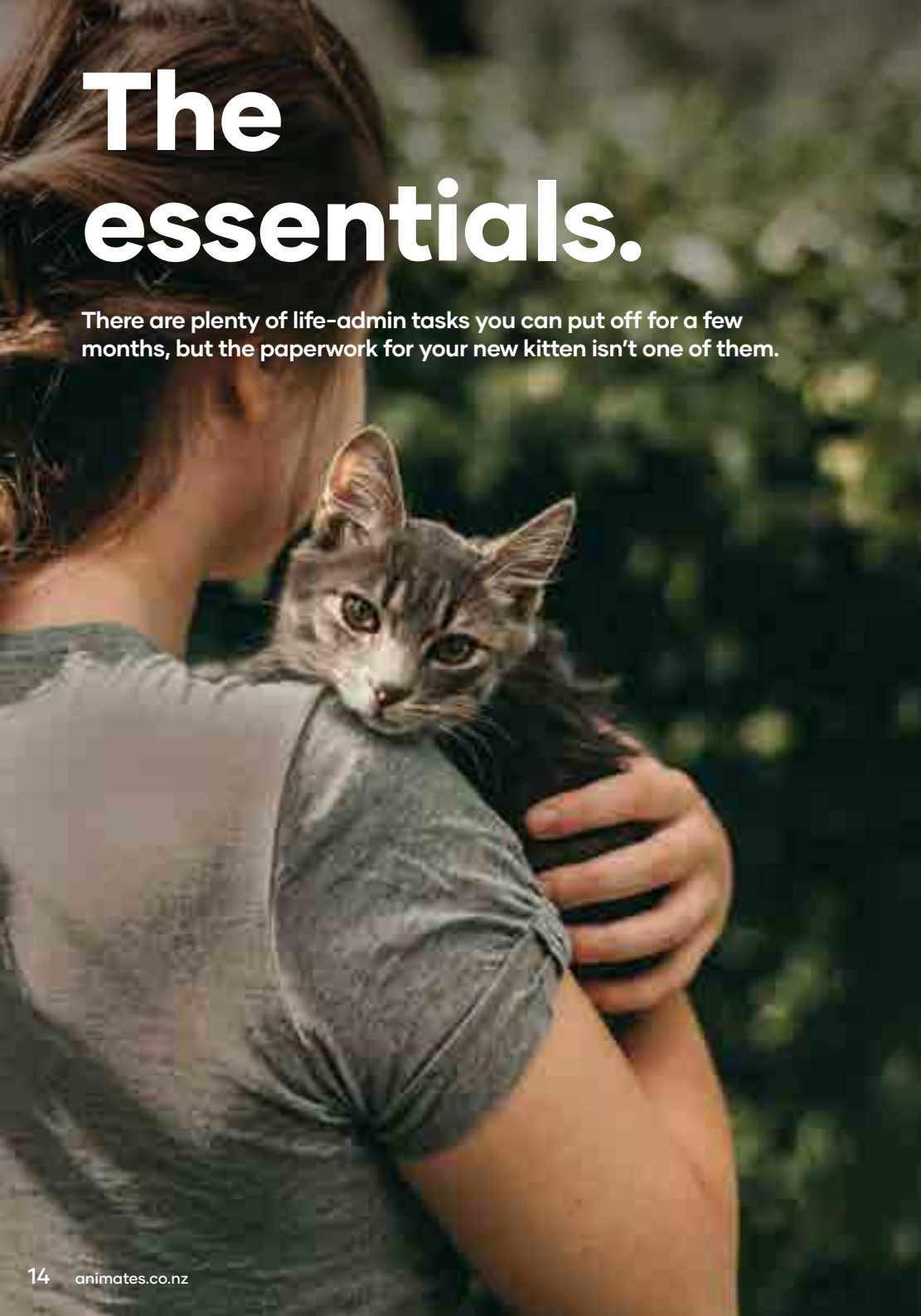
Trouble & Trix
Kitten stretch collars with bell and buckle

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. Microchipping your kitten is highly recommended and is now mandatory in certain areas. Check with your local city/regional council around microchipping bylaws where you live. 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 Animals NZ Register. NZCAR is operated by Companion Animals New Zealand, a not-for-profit trust that helps lost pets get home.

To find out more information visit animalregister.co.nz

Purebred kitten

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.

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.

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*.

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



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?

Protein is an essential part of a cat's diet to stay healthy, they require much more protein than dogs.

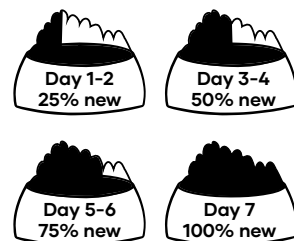
Kittens develop rapidly, both physically and mentally. You need science-led nutrition to support this growth and help strengthen their immune system.

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 science-led nutrition that contains the best-quality vitamin and mineral ingredients. They can 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.

Visit animates.co.nz for more on feeding your kitten.

Always ensure fresh water is available. Kittens on a dry food only diet require more water.

Benefits of science-led 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 science-led nutrition brands at Animates or Animates Vetcare, and your kitten will reap the rewards.

These can 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?
Scientific studies show that purring has healing powers and is therapeutic for cats!

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.

Desexing your kitten

It is recommended that kittens be desexed between four to six months of age. Not only are there a number of health benefits of having your pet desexed, it also decreases the number of unwanted kittens that find themselves homeless or in shelters. The procedure generally requires a day stay at your local vet and they tend to bounce back quickly.

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 30.

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 and environment.

You can reduce the risk of zoonotic disease by:



Clean out litter trays regularly. Pregnant and immuno-compromised people should wear gloves or have someone assist.



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



Disposing of faeces in the tray quickly.



Wearing gloves when gardening in case of contact with faeces.



Washing your cat's bed often.



Isolating unwell cats.

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, immuno-compromised, pregnant women and their babies are most susceptible

to the transmission of disease from cats such as toxoplasmosis, due to their vulnerable immune systems. This is why 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 clinic, visit 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:

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Sneezing
- Runny eyes and nasal discharge
- Unable to poo
- Trouble urinating
- Fur loss or scaly skin



Did you know?
Some common household plants are toxic to cats?
Find out more at animates.co.nz/articles

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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.

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. In a cat's lifetime you should expect at least two visits to the vet for dental procedures. Once they are comfortable with this, you can put a plan in place.

Look to their diet

Your kitten's science-led 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.



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 present 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.

Flea and worm solutions

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

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.

It's important to use kitten specific treatments to avoid illness.



Types of cat doors

The best type of cat door for you will depend on where you want to put it and how many cats are in the neighbourhood. You'll find a full range of cat doors at Animates, as well as experts who can help you to make a good choice.

- Microchip cat doors only work for your microchipped cat (or cats). If there are lots of other cats in your neighbourhood (potential cat burglars), this is the way to go.
- Magnetic cat doors also only admit your cat, but your pet has to wear a magnetic collar key.

- Standard cat doors let any cat through, but they can be locked in various ways.

Training your kitten to use a cat door

Kittens shouldn't have complete outdoor freedom until they are six months old, fully vaccinated, desexed and microchipped. If you do cat door training earlier than this, be prepared to lock the door and keep the kitten inside when you're not around.

1. If your cat door has a removable flap, take it off for initial training. If the flap isn't easy to remove, pin it open with duct tape.
2. With your pet on the inside and you on the outside, use toys or treats to entice the kitten through the hole. Calling your kitten's name will help too.
3. When your kitten successfully steps through the hole, reward them with verbal praise, playtime or a treat (or all three).
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until your kitten is confidently going backwards and forwards through the door.
5. Put the door flap back in or remove the duct tape, then repeat steps 2 and 3. If your kitten is hesitant about pushing against the door flap, push your hand through to make the flap swing. Your kitty will soon get the idea.

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 make sure it is placed in an area that is quiet and has low household traffic.

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.

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. If you have other pets, such as dogs, or small children, make sure to place it somewhere out of their reach.

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.

We recommend following the rule of one litter tray per cat, plus one extra. This will help to prevent any unwanted territorial

behaviour and inappropriate urination in the long run.

6. Reinforce their good behaviour

Kittens do not instinctively know how to use their litter tray and need to be taught how to use it. 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.

Natural litter

Trouble and Trix Natural Cat Litter (pictured) is made from plant-extracts soya bean and guar gum (tofu, bean plant extract). This makes the litter 100% natural, biodegradable, digestible to kittens and non-toxic.

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, 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.

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! Cats are most vocal when they are kittens. 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.

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. 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.

Cat talk

It's been established that kittens only use their "meow" to talk to their humans.



Did you know?

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

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

- Rapid movement of the tail.
- Ears flat on their head.
- Large dilated pupils.

I'm feeling defensive

- Hissing or growling.
- Tail between their legs (or a 'bushy' tail).
- Crouched down low to the ground.
- Raised fur along their back and tail.
- Prolonged eye contact.
- Cowering or hiding.

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.

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

regular basis.

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



Scratching post, teaser toy and mix & match toys. Toys in image may vary to products in-store and online.

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. You want to make sure it has a sturdy base and a variety of surfaces to scratch.

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.

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. Rubbing their face and body against different surfaces can mean they are content in their environment.

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.

Why do cats purr?

Why do cats knead?

Why do cats rub on surfaces?

Why do cats scratch?

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

You can manage your cat's scratching 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. Scratching also allows cats to mark their territory with the scent glands on their paws. 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, as they love to reach up and stretch while scratching. 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!

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

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.

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.



The Surefeed Sealed Pet Bowl

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.



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.



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. Using treats while brushing will help your kitten associate brushing with a reward, making the process more enjoyable for both you and your kitten.

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.



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 and cover it with a towel, making sure there is enough airflow. Never place the carrier on the front seat as the air bags can be dangerous.
- 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.

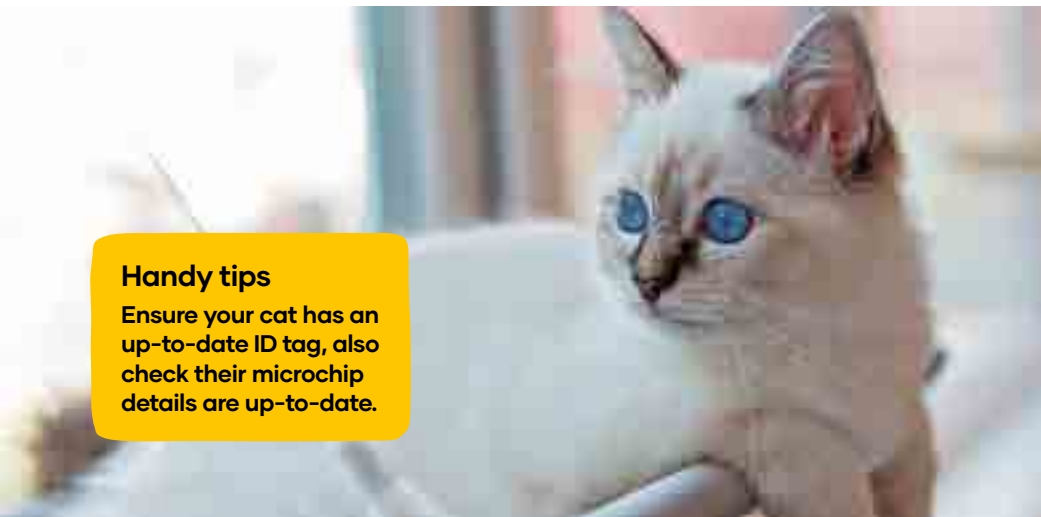
Ideally, ask someone who is able to stay at your place and maintain your pet's normal diet and routine. If your cat will need to go to a different house, check that it's escape-proof and take lots of home comforts to help them settle in, such as familiar toys or a crate or cat carrier they can retreat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

To find your nearest **Animates Vetcare Cattery** scan the QR code below.



Handy tips

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



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.



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 hunt?

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. It is recommended that you keep your cat inside at night to avoid fights.

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. The exception to this is the Maine Coon!

This is one cat breed who love water and have a semi water-repellent fur, which keeps them warm and dry whilst playing in the water.

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.

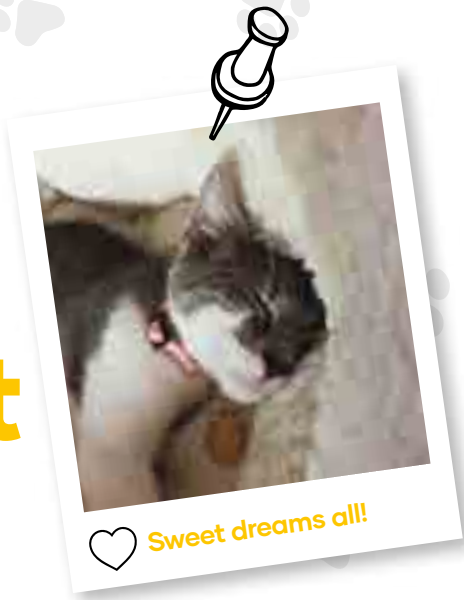
By taking good care of your pet's health, you can increase their chances of living to a ripe old age. Providing your cat with a science-led nutrition diet is important for maintaining a healthy weight and delivering the nutrients they need. You can help ward off life-threatening illnesses with regular trips to your local Animates Vetcare for all your pet's vaccinations, boosters and general check-ups.

Did you know?

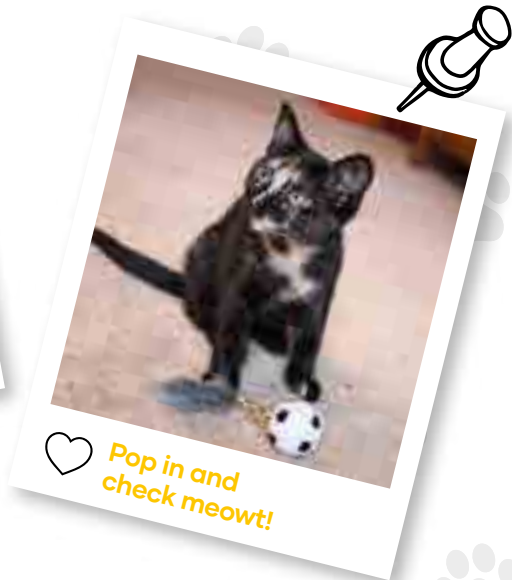
Cats aren't just remarkable because of their quirky personalities – each cat's nose has a unique pattern, similar to a human fingerprint.

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

20% off

Selected dry kitten food

See over the page for details.

ANIMATES

20% off

Selected wet kitten food

See over the page for details.

ANIMATES

20% off

One cat item of choice

Excludes food & flea treatments

ANIMATES

10% off

One cat item of choice

Excludes food & flea treatments

ANIMATES

20% off

Flea or worm treatment



Visit animates.co.nz to find your nearest store.

20% off selected wet kitten food

Offer valid until 31 December 2024. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks or customer orders. Not transferable for cash. One voucher per transaction. One time use per member. Includes Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin, Black Hawk, Pro Plan and Primal. One time use per member. Must be or become an Animates PetPoints member to redeem in-store.

To use at Animates.co.nz you must login to your account and use checkout code: KITTENWET



23115100016907

20% off selected dry kitten food

Offer valid until 31 December 2024. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks or customer orders. Not transferable for cash. One voucher per transaction. One time use per member. Includes Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin, Black Hawk, Orijen, Acana and Pro Plan. One time use per member. Must be or become an Animates PetPoints member to redeem in-store.

To use at Animates.co.nz you must login to your account and use checkout code: KITTENSUP



23115000016908

10% off one cat item of choice

Offer valid until 31 December 2024. Discount is off full retail price on one cat item. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks or customer orders. Not transferable for cash. One voucher per transaction. One time use per member. Excludes food, flea & worm treatments. Must be or become an Animates PetPoints member to redeem in-store.

To use at Animates.co.nz you must login to your account and use checkout code: KITTEN10



23115200016910

20% off one cat item of choice

Offer valid until 31 December 2024. Discount is off full retail price on one cat item. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks or customer orders. Not transferable for cash. One voucher per transaction. One time use per member. Excludes food, flea & worm treatments. Must be or become an Animates PetPoints member to redeem in-store.

To use at Animates.co.nz you must login to your account and use checkout code: KITTEN20



23115300016911

20% off flea and worm treatment

Offer valid until 31 December 2024. Discount is off full retail price. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. No rain-checks or customer orders. Not transferable for cash. One voucher per transaction. One time use per member. Must be or become an Animates PetPoints member to redeem in-store.

To use at Animates.co.nz you must login to your account and use checkout code: KITTENFLEA



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Notes

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