

## Basic Information on Raising a Kitten

Before you bring your cat home you will need food, a food dish, a water bowl, interactive toys, a brush or comb, a scratching post, and a litter box.

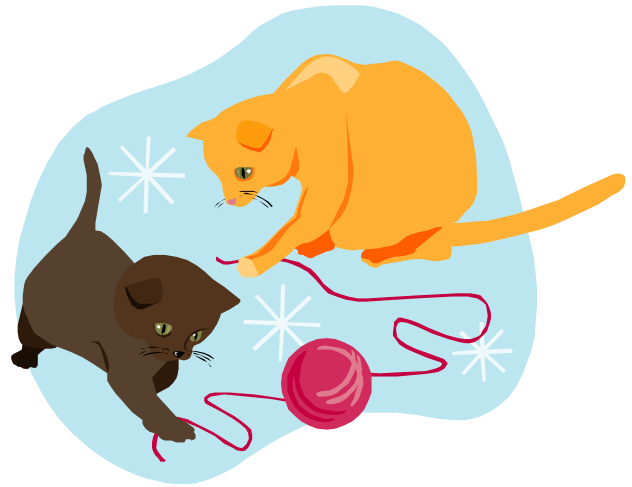
It is important to feed your cat a premium-quality dry or canned cat food. Kittens 6 to 12 weeks old should be fed four times a day. Kittens 12 to 24 weeks old should be fed three times a day. An adult cat should be fed one large meal or two smaller meals each day. Feed specific meals and throw away any leftover food after 20 minutes. Do not make food available all the time; however, fresh, clean water must be available at all times. All bowls should be washed daily.

Cats should have a warm, dry place of their own in the house. Be sure to wash the bedding often. It's safer to keep your cat indoors. Outdoor cats can get poisoned, hit by cars, and hurt in fights. They also are more apt to pick up diseases and parasites. Indoor cats can live 15 to 20 years.

Your cat should see a veterinarian at least once a year for an examination and shots. Also, take your feline to a vet if he becomes sick or injured. Carefully go over your cat's body at least once a week to check for fleas, ear mites, and bumps or cuts.

All indoor cats need a litter box. The bathroom, utility room, and back porch are all good places to put the box. Always keep it in the same place. Scoop solids out at least once a day. Dump everything, wash the box with a mild detergent, and refill it with new litter at least once a week. Cats won't use a messy, smelly litter box!

Your cat will keep himself relatively clean. Most cats rarely need a bath, but they do need to be brushed or combed. Frequent grooming helps keep your feline's coat clean, reduces shedding, and reduces the number of hairballs he will have.



All cats need to scratch to loosen old nail sheathes and allow new nails to grow. Cutting your cat's nails every 10 to 14 days will keep them relatively blunt and thus make them less likely to harm arms of people and furniture. Provide your cat with a sturdy scratching post covered with rough material such as sisal or carpet to further prevent household destruction. A sprinkle of catnip once or twice a month will keep your cat interested in the scratching post.

All cats delight in stalking imaginary prey. The best toys for cats are those that can be made to jump and dance around. The cat will act out his predator role by pouncing on the toys instead of people's ankles. Warning: Do not use your hands or fingers as play objects with young kittens, or your cat may have biting and scratching problems as he matures.

It is important to spay (females) or neuter (males) your cat since he or she can breed up to three times per year. This operation prevents your cats from having unwanted litters and protects them from certain diseases of the reproductive organs. Neutered cats seldom spray urine around the house to mark territory and are generally easier to own.

If your cat has fleas, try frequent flea-combing. Ask us about a flea control program and see our "Flea Control" handout.

**Please Note:** The information in this handout is meant to provide basic information only. Please see a salesperson for more information.

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# DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO CARE FOR YOUR KITTEN?

## **FOOD**

A high quality premium kitten food is important to ensure your kitten grows into a healthy adult cat. (See our "Premium Pet Foods" Handout)

## **VITAMINS / SKIN SUPPLEMENTS**

A good multi-vitamin will balance out his nutritional requirements; however, vitamins won't be necessary if he's on a premium cat food.

## **LITTER BOX**

All cats need a litter box. Scoop solids out at least once a day. Wash with a mild detergent and refill it at least once a week. Cats will not use a smelly litter box. A kitten should be placed in the litter box upon waking and after meals. Always keep the box in the same place.

## **LITTER**

There are several good litters from which to choose. Clumping litter is inexpensive and convenient.

## **LEASH, COLLAR, & HARNESS**

The collar should be stretchy or have a breakaway buckle to allow the cat to get free should he catch the collar on a fence or tree limb. Getting your kitten used to a leash and collar or harness early will make him easier to handle later on. He can easily be taught to walk on a leash as well as to ride in cars. You must always keep him under control and prevent him from leaping from the car should he be frightened. (See our "Travel Tips" Handout)

## **IDENTIFICATION TAGS**

Too many pets get lost! Your pet should wear an identification tag attached to the collar. You may also consider a microchip.

## **BELL**

Don't forget to add a bell to your cat's collar. They are good hunters and will stalk birds and squirrels. The bell will alert these unsuspecting creatures.

## **TOYS**

These are important for mental stimulation during times you're not around. It's up to the cat's human family to engage him in interactive play. This is done with toys that can float, twirl, dart, or fly in a way that simulates live prey (such as fishing pole style toys). Do not use your hands or fingers as play objects with young kittens or your cat may have biting and scratching problems as he matures.

## **BRUSH OR COMB**

By using the right brush for your kitten's hair texture you can avoid mats and tangles. Even short-haired breeds should be brushed regularly to stimulate the natural oils in the coat and help prevent hairballs.

## **SHAMPOOS & CONDITIONERS**

Because the pH level in a kitten's skin is different from ours, it is important to use shampoos and conditioners designed specifically for use on a kitten or cat.

## **FLEA & TICK PRODUCTS**

These pests can make your cat's life miserable as well as being a health risk. We'll be happy to recommend a flea and tick control plan. (See our Flea Control Handout)

## **FOOD & WATER BOWLS**

We recommend sturdy, easy to clean bowls.

## **BEDS**

A bed will not only provide him with warmth and security but will also encourage your kitten to stay off your furniture.

## **STAIN REMOVER & DEODORIZER**

Should your kitten miss the litter box, it's important to not only remove the stain, but also the odor. The odor is what will attract him back to that same spot. We recommend an enzyme formula that breaks down the bacteria which causes the odor.

## **BOOKS**

A book will go into greater detail regarding breed standards and personalities as well as general care and training.

