

Your independent family vet. Always.



## Kitten guide

Caring for your new kitten

[thepetvet.co.uk](https://thepetvet.co.uk)



## Congratulations on your new kitten!

Your kitten's health is very important to us, so we've created this information guide to help you keep your new addition happy and healthy from the day you bring them home. Our team of Vets and Nurses have plenty of knowledge and experience and will be happy to offer you advice.

### Settling in:

Bringing your kitten home is a very exciting time, but there are a few things to think about. Please remember that your kitten may only be a few weeks old, so the change in environment could be unsettling. Make sure you've given your new pet the time and space they need to adjust to their new surroundings, which may take a few days.

To begin with, be quiet around them as sudden sounds could cause your kitten to panic. If you have small children it is best to ask them to be gentle, and not to pull or tug at your kitten.

### What your kitten will need:



Litter tray



Toys



Bed



Litter



Food



Water & food bowls

### House rules

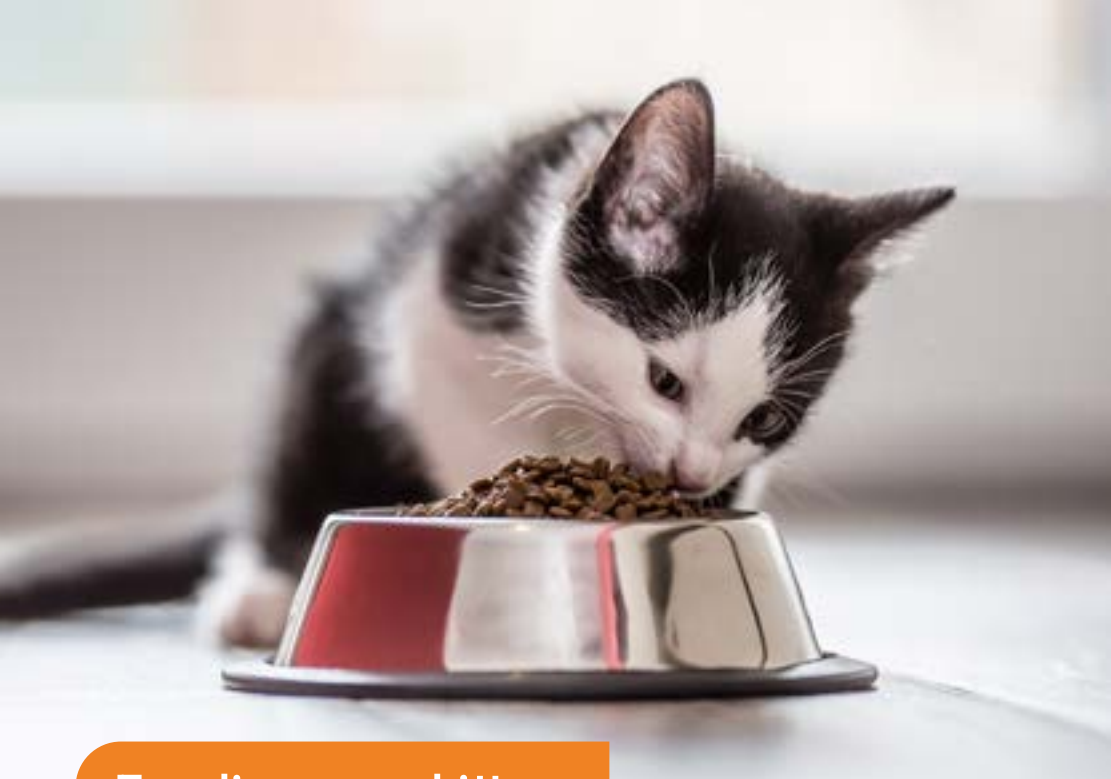
Generally cats don't easily abide by any type of rule but from a young age it is good to teach them not to do certain things. You might have areas of the house you don't want your pet in, or you might not want them on the furniture, or the kitchen counter. Positive reinforcement can work well, for example offering a treat or a toy to entice them away.

## Socialisation

Cats generally don't appreciate the company of other cats. Unless they have been brought up together, they tend to just tolerate each other.

If you already have a cat, it is good to remember that your home was their home before it became the home of your new kitten; so if they don't get along, you will need to think about an alternative solution, for example, giving them separate areas of the house. It is also advised that each cat should have their own food and water bowls as well as at least one litter tray per cat.





## Feeding your kitten

**Cats need access to fresh water all the time, although some cats do like water that has been standing for a while or dripping/running water to drink from, so we recommend trying a few options to find out what your kitten prefers.**

Kittens have quite hardy digestive systems, meaning they can eat a variety of foods without becoming ill. However, we still recommend that you make any changes to foods over a few days, just in case your kitten is sensitive. Feeding a good quality complete food is important as this will aid with the growth and development of your kitten.

Dry foods tend to be better than wet as they can help keep teeth in good condition but you may find your kitten prefers wet food. Remember wet food is 80% water, whereas dry food is nutrient dense, so follow the feeding guidelines on the food packaging to make sure your kitten is getting the right nutrients.

The natural feeding behaviour for a cat is to graze, so we recommend serving their daily allowance in one go. This works better for dry food as it stays fresh for longer. If your kitten has a wet food diet, you'll need to refresh their food throughout the day. If your kitten doesn't eat all their food, start fresh the next day.

If your kitten doesn't graze, try feeding them measured meals at set times to avoid over-eating.

## Litter training



**Most kittens learn to use a litter tray pretty easily, but if they are having a few problems:**

- Always make sure you place your kitten in the litter tray 15 mins after eating as this is the usual time they want to go.
- Clean the tray regularly as some cats don't like to use an already soiled tray.
- If any accidents happen, place what you can into the tray as this will leave a scent to indicate to the kitten that it is OK to toilet here.
- Never punish your kitten for going in the wrong place, they won't associate the 'bad behaviour' with the punishment; all you'll do is make your kitten scared of you.

## Exercise and play

**Cats are natural hunters, so most of their games are based on hunting and catching objects.**

It is good to have a variety of toys available but you'll need to rotate the ones in use; they can only 'kill' something once and your cat will lose interest in it quickly after they have caught the item.

Laser toys are great fun, just remember that there needs to be a physical object for the kitten to 'kill' at the end of the game, otherwise this can lead to your pet becoming frustrated and confused.

Avoid playing using your hands as the target. This can end up with your kitten scratching you, and when your kitten gets older it will think that it's OK to attack hands and feet, which will hurt.





## Grooming

Cats are usually pretty good at keeping on top of their own grooming, but if you have a long-haired kitten, or as your cat gets older, they may sometimes require assistance.

There are a number of different grooming tools available and finding the right one for your pet is important, so please ask for advice before purchasing anything.

Cats should never need a bath, although if your kitten gets really dirty, just use a damp cloth to wipe them down.

## Dental care

A good quality diet can help keep teeth clean and healthy. Your kitten will start losing their baby teeth from 4 months to 9 months old.

It is normal to find these teeth lying around the house, so be careful not to stand on them as they are quite sharp.

It may be an option to start brushing your kitten's teeth to help them get used to it, but only try this if your kitten will let you without getting too stressed.

If you need advice on how to brush your pet's teeth then book in for a chat with one of our Nurses.

## Give them the best start with a Pet Health Plan

Prevention is always better than cure to help give your kitten a long, healthy and happy life. Get them on the right track by registering your kitten with our Pet Health Plan. Through a simple monthly direct debit, you can **start saving up to 65%** on their preventive healthcare.

### What's included?



Annual booster including  
Vet health check



12 months flea & worm  
treatment



Microchipping  
or £10 credit if already  
microchipped



6 x Nurse checks  
with nail clips



1 x Nurse consultation  
with full health check



10% OFF all surgical  
procedures, treatments,  
medication and products

Scan the QR code to find out  
more and retrieve your quote.



## Vaccinations

Vaccination protects your kitten from a number of serious and highly infectious diseases, such as feline leukaemia, flu and enteritis.

It works by priming their immune system so that if they come into contact with the disease later, their body is better able to fight back.

A new kitten should have their first vaccination at 9 weeks of age, followed by a second vaccination 3-4 weeks later. Until your kitten has completed the initial course of injections they should not be allowed outside.

Each year after their first vaccination, your cat will require a top-up booster vaccine to ensure they continue to be protected. If your cat misses a booster then they will need to re-start the course again.

# Fleas and other external parasites

Parasites that infect pets can also affect people and sometimes cause serious illness.

Fleas spend part of their lifecycle on the skin of animals, feeding on their blood. They cause irritation and allergies and, if left untreated, can cause serious conditions - including infections, fur loss and anaemia.



Fleas are also an important part of the tapeworm lifecycle, which can in turn cause serious illness to your pet. Tapeworm egg capsules are shed into the environment from the faeces of a tapeworm-infected cat. Flea larvae ingest the tapeworm eggs. As adult fleas develop from the larvae, they find a furry host to feed on their blood. Your cat scratches and bites their fur to relieve the itching and in doing so, eats the fleas. The tapeworms inside the eaten fleas develop into adults and attach themselves to your pet's small intestine.

Preventing fleas is much easier for you and your pet than treating an infestation, so we recommend treating all the pets in your home every month throughout their lives.

We recommend a combined flea and worm treatment from a veterinary surgery, which is not licensed for general sale. This will be more effective than products you can buy elsewhere, and contains active ingredients that cover a wider spectrum (for example lungworm).

## The cotton wool test

**Top tip:** Fleas are hard to spot, so while you're grooming your kitten, look out for dark flecks on their skin and coat. If these turn red when combed onto a damp piece of cotton wool, then this is flea faeces, and a sign you're dealing with a live infestation.

Your kitten might also be scratching, chewing or licking their fur more than usual, or have red or inflamed skin.

## Other external parasites

Kittens can also be affected by:

- Lice
- Fur mites
- Mange mites
- Ear mites
- Ticks

# Worms and worming

Any cat can pick up worms, and kittens may even be born with them or pick them up from their mother's milk.

A heavy infestation of worms can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, weight loss, constipation and a dull coat. Worms pose a risk to humans, especially young children, the elderly and those with a weakened immune system. Risks to people include Toxocarosis which can result in blindness.

**You should ensure that your cat is continually protected from worms so we recommend using a treatment prescribed by your Vet every month.**

The main types of worms are:



**Roundworms** - they look like tiny strands of fine spaghetti and are the most common type of worm. They may be seen in the faeces of infected animals.



**Tapeworms** - these are made up of segments which form long chains up to half a metre long. The segments look like grains of rice. Tapeworm segments may be spotted around your kitten's bottom.



**Lungworms** - these can be picked up if your cat catches and eats small prey such as slugs, snails or licks their trails. Signs include coughing, difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, vomiting or diarrhoea, weight loss, lethargy and bleeding longer than normal from a minor injury.

Remember that your kitten can have worms even if you cannot see any sign of them in their faeces. Regular preventive treatment is essential. Our Vets and Nurses will be happy to advise you on the safest worming programme to follow.



## Neutering

If you don't plan to breed from your cat, having him or her neutered is the responsible thing to do.

As well as preventing unwanted litters, neutering reduces the risk of a number of health problems, and can prevent hormonal problems and certain cancers later on in your pet's life. It also removes your cat's sexual urges and can resolve or prevent some hormone-related behavioural problems.

On average, neutering can increase life expectancy by 1 whole year.

Kittens can generally be neutered from 6 months of age.

## Microchipping

It's a legal requirement for cat owners to microchip their cats before 20 weeks of age.

Microchipping is a great method of permanently identifying your pet. Our Vets and Nurses can carry this out for you quickly and easily. A tiny microchip, the size of a grain of rice, is injected under the skin at the back of the neck in a simple procedure.

Each chip has a unique number which is stored on a central computer database. If your cat is found, their chip can be quickly read with a hand held scanner and the number checked against a central database to identify you as their owner.



## Pet insurance



**Good quality pet insurance means that you don't have to worry about vet bills should your pet suffer an accident or illness.**

We are a member of the Vetsure Pet Insurance accredited network.

**We work with Vetsure because:**

- We handle your claims directly with them so that you can concentrate on your pet's recovery.
- Vetsure provide lifetime policies. This is the most complete type of pet insurance available. You can choose the cover level that's right for you.
- They offer cover against an unlimited number of conditions.
- You only pay your chosen level of excess once per unrelated condition.

We're pleased to be able to offer 5 weeks free with Vetsure Pet Insurance so that you can give them a try. Just scan the QR code below to activate your policy online.

Alternatively, you can give the friendly Vetsure team a call on 0800 050 2022 to discuss the policy options and activate 5 weeks free insurance.



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we care

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surgery locations



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for the care of your pet**

For full details, please refer to our  
terms and conditions on our website.

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