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Your New Kitten

Congratulations on getting your new kitten. It is such an exciting time for you and the family. There will certainly be times when you are being driven mad by this little creature who is climbing the curtains and doing circuit training up and down the stairs but it will be well worth it. I'm sure your kitten is already a wonderful character and he/she will always make you smile. Soon you'll not be able to imagine life without him/her. Take stacks of photos, because before you know it he/she will be all grown up!

Settling in:

When your kitten first arrives at his/her new home it can be a very stressful experience. For the first week, try to feed the same food at the same times as he/she is used to. Ensure that your kitten has a safe place where he/she can retreat.

Feeding:

Young kittens should be fed 4 meals, evenly spaced through the day. We recommend feeding a kitten/growth diet since these are specially formulated to help your kitten triple in size over the next 3 months. It is important to make any changes to your kitten's diet gradually, so slowly increase the proportion of new food and decrease the proportion of old food.

How much food your kitten needs varies depending on the brand of food and each individual's metabolic rate. It is very important not to let your kitten get overweight because fat laid down as a kitten is very hard to work off later in life. Obesity can cause and compound many health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and joint disease. If your kitten is the correct weight you should be able to feel but not see his/her ribs and spine. We can give nutritional information and are very happy to weigh your kitten and give advice on feeding.

Your kitten should have fresh water available at all times.

Vaccination:

Vaccination will protect your kitten against cat flu (Calicivirus and Herpes virus), enteritis (Feline Panleucopenia virus), Chlamydia and Feline Leukaemia virus. In order to achieve good immunity your kitten needs to be vaccinated twice. The first vaccine can be given from 9 weeks old, the second vaccine is then given 3-4 weeks later. Full immunity is not achieved until 1 week after the 2nd vaccine therefore you should keep your kitten indoors until then. We will give you a certificate for your kitten when he/she is fully vaccinated.

After the kitten vaccinations your cat will need a health check every year to make sure no problems develop unchecked. At this time we can give a booster to ensure that his/her immunity does not wane. Although it is essential to vaccinate, both to protect your own cat and to keep diseases at bay in the community at large, we try to only vaccinate for the diseases your cat is most at risk of catching. Therefore if your cat's lifestyle changes, please

let us know as we may need to vaccinate against different diseases according to the circumstances.

Should you wish to take your kitten abroad one of the things you need to do is vaccinate against Rabies. We can take you through the process of getting a pet passport. Please ask if you need any further details.

Worming:

Kittens often are infected with roundworms. It is important to worm young kittens regularly. We can recommend a worming protocol tailored to you and your kitten's circumstances. Wormers supplied by pet shops are not always effective since the worms are often resistant to them, but not to worry, we can prescribe very effective wormers that are really easy to administer.

Fleas:

Unfortunately all cats are susceptible to infestation with fleas. Fleas can bite people and cause skin irritation and scabs in many cats. We can supply 'spot on' treatments which are effective, safe and easy to use. For full flea protection in your home we can also supply a spray for your carpets and furniture. Pet shop flea sprays, powders and collars are not always effective since they aren't very powerful and they don't last very long.

Identification:

Having identification on your kitten is essential. Cats being cats, they are independent and tend to wander far from home. Cats often get their collars caught in fences and on branches and are trapped. So if your kitten will be wearing a collar it is essential that you choose a safety type that has an elastic portion or a clasp that undoes when pulled. If you do use a collar you can attach a tag engraved with your contact details in case your cat gets lost or injured.

Since cats often lose collars and can get trapped by them, we strongly recommend getting your kitten microchipped. This is a tiny chip that is injected under the skin at the back of the neck. It contains a barcode that is unique and registered to your kitten. Should your kitten get lost or stolen, any vets or rescue centre can scan your kitten and find out whom he/she belongs to. Microchipping is quick and easy to do in a routine appointment. No sedation is required.

Pet insurance:

We highly recommend insuring your kitten. Pet insurance will pay your vet bills for any accident or disease. This means that if your kitten has a problem you can give him/her the best care possible without having to worry about cost. Please ensure that your insurance policy will pay out on problems for the whole life of your pet, not just for the first year in which they occur. Without this 'lifetime' cover, long term conditions may be excluded and not paid for.

Teeth:

One of the main health problems affecting older cats is dental disease. In order to prevent this you should start training your kitten to have his/her teeth brushed as early as possible. With the many yummy pet toothpaste flavours available they may well start to enjoy it! Feeding dry food will also help keep your cat's teeth healthy. It is important that your kitten gets used to having his/her mouth, eyes, ears, feet and nails examined and also being groomed. Doing

this little and often from when he/she is tiny will save you a whole heap of frustration (and scratches later on).

Health checks:

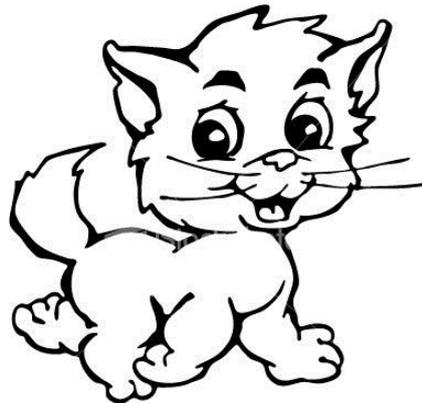
It is important to have your kitten checked by a vet regularly. This allows us to pick up any problems early and to stop them progressing. It also allows you to discuss any worries or queries with us. We do a free health check for all kittens who have their vaccinations with us. This is usually done at 5 months old so please come armed with all your questions.

Neutering:

If you are not planning to breed from your kitten when he/she is older we recommend that you neuter him/her. Female cats can get pregnant very easily so it is best to get them spayed as early as possible (about 5 months old). Entire Toms will spray in the house and are also more likely to wander great distances and fight with other cats. Castration will avoid these problems and can be done from 5 months old. We perform surgery in the morning and your cat should be ready to go home that same afternoon. Your cat will recover amazingly fast and soon be back to his/her normal bouncy self.

Hope Vets:

Should you have any worries or queries about your kitten's health or development we are very happy to chat with you. Give us a call on 01442 833 198.



ENJOY YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND!