



TANGLEFOOT
VETERINARY
SERVICES LTD.



Bringing Home a New Kitten





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Congratulations!!!

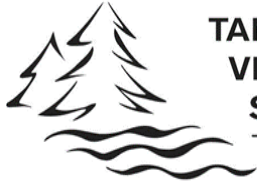
This is such an exciting time! Few things in life feel as good as having a new kitten in the house, and you're going to have a great time playing and getting to know each other.

During the first year, your tiny ball of cuteness is going to grow up quickly and learn new things every day. This booklet is going to give you tips and tricks to get you started on your kitten's journey.



New Kitten Checklist:

- Break away collar
- Litter boxes/ litter
- ID Tag/ microchip
- Food and water dishes
 - Kitten bed
- Grooming tools
- Nail trimmers
 - Toys
- Crate/kennel



Bringing Home a New Kitten

The first few days are very stressful. Here are a few things to help smooth the transition:

Try to keep the household as quiet as possible. There are so many new sights, smells, and sounds in your home and separation from their mother can be quite stressful. All family members should remain as calm as possible. When introducing the family, do it one at a time to avoid overwhelming your kitten.

Potty time. Oftentimes kittens come litter box trained as they learn from their mother early on. Although they may be litter box trained already, you will need to show them where the litter box is.

Create a safe place. Yes, crate training is most commonly used with dogs but it can also be useful for cats.

Setting up a crate will create a safe space for your kitten to sleep undisturbed and to have a place where they can be left at home unsupervised. More on this topic later.

Start building a bond. Cats can be picky on who they consider friends. While we are tempted to pick them up and snuggle, it's best to give them space and let them come to you. Some cats will want to interact and play right away while others might need a while to gain confidence and come out of hiding. While you shouldn't force interaction, you can encourage your kitten to come out with some treats or toys.





Visit Your Veterinarian

What to expect:

During the first visit your kitten will receive a physical exam where the vet will:

- Weigh your kitten
- Listen to their heart and lungs
- Take their temperature
- Examine eyes, ears, and genitalia
- Examine skin and coat
- Examine mouth and dental alignment
- Palpate abdomen and lymph nodes

Deworming

Deworming is highly recommended for kittens, as they are usually born with worms passed on from their mom. In addition, kittens tend to get themselves into mischief by placing their mouths on everything, increasing the risk of your kitten contracting parasites. Dewormer is sent home with each set of kitten vaccines.



Vaccinations:

Making sure your kitten is up to date on vaccinations increases the chances of them living a long and healthy life.

What diseases do vaccines protect against?

***Feline Panleukopenia (FPV): CORE** - Also known as feline distemper. This disease is contagious and often fatal. Clinical signs include vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, fever, loss of appetite.

***Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR): CORE** - This virus causes a severe upper respiratory infection. This virus is spread from eye and nasal discharge of an infected cat. Clinical signs include sneezing, conjunctivitis, fever, appetite loss, open mouth breathing and coughing.

***Feline Calicivirus (FCV): CORE** - This is another virus that affects the respiratory system in addition to the oral cavity. It is spread by secretions of an infected cat and can be airborne if an infected cat sneezes. Clinical signs include discharge from eyes and nose, moderate fever, sores on the tongue and mouth, and sneezing.

Rabies: CORE - Rabies attacks the nervous system resulting in death. All mammals including humans are susceptible to this disease. Rabies vaccination is required by law for travel outside of Canada. It is estimated that 0.5% of bats in BC carry rabies. Skunks, coyotes, wolves and raccoons can also carry rabies.

Feline Leukemia (FVLV) - This virus attacks the immune system and leaves the cat vulnerable to secondary infections. Feline Leukemia is transmitted from one cat to another through saliva, blood, and, to some extent, urine and feces. Symptoms are vague and often infection can only be diagnosed with a blood test (some symptoms include: enlarged lymph nodes, pale gums, weight loss, loss of appetite, fever and diarrhea).



Feline Chlamydiosis - This is an upper respiratory disease particularly affecting the mucous membranes of the eyes. Symptoms include weepy eyes, and sometimes sneezing and nasal discharge.

***These three diseases are combined into one vaccine known as FVRCP.**

Kitten Vaccine Schedule

8 Weeks	12 Weeks	16 Weeks	1 Year
FVRCP	FVRCP	FVRCP Rabies	FVRCP Rabies

Pet Insurance:

Medical pet insurance is so important, especially for those unexpected vet visits. Buying pet insurance can give pet owners peace of mind and options so they can make the best care decisions possible for their pet. For some breeds (Persians, Bengal, British Shorthair, Ragamuffin, and Siamese), it is highly recommended to have pet insurance as they are more prone to diseases or health problems.





Feeding your Kitten

We know that as pet parents you want to feed your new kitten the best food so that they can grow up happy and healthy. Finding a diet that is well balanced is essential to the development of your kitten. Look for a food that is rich in protein to support their growing body and high energy.

Kittens need kitten food!!! Why? Because kitten food is formulated with a balance of nutrients to help kittens grow properly.

Key goals to look for in a kitten food:

1. Promotes brain development
2. Healthy growth- optimal energy, protein, vitamins and minerals
3. Promotes a healthy GI system - highly digestible proteins
4. Made of animal protein. Cats are obligate carnivores.

Can I feed my kitten milk?

Although kittens love milk, it actually does not contain any nutritional value and can not replace a complete and balanced diet. Milk can also cause gastrointestinal problems which can result in diarrhea. We do not recommend feeding milk to your kitten.

Wet food vs. dry food

It is a good idea to introduce wet food at an early age so that they are able to get used to both wet and dry. Wet food is beneficial to your kitten; it provides moisture to their diet and keeps them hydrated.

How often should I feed?

Kittens have small stomachs that can't hold the amount of food that their adult stomachs can. Kittens do however, require more food on a daily basis than their adult self. It is best to feed smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day. Kittens aged 8-12 weeks should be fed 4 meals a day. Kittens aged three to six months need at least three meals, and junior cats over six months need at least two small meals.

How much should I feed?

Check the recommendations on your kitten food for the correct amount to feed. Use this as a guideline and continually assess your kitten's body condition score.



Litter Boxes

Kittens learn to use the litter box very quickly. Most of the time kittens will already be litter trained when you get them as their mother teaches them when they are young.

How many litter boxes should I have?

For multi cat households there should be a tray provided for each cat plus one. For example if you have 3 cats you should have 4 litter boxes.



Where should I put the litter boxes?

The trays should be in an accessible place and in different rooms. If you have multiple floors in your house, place a few on each floor. Most cats like a quiet and private place to eliminate. Litter boxes should be placed in a spot that is not near any food.

How should I maintain the litter box?

The litter box should be cleaned regularly as most cats do not like using soiled litter. The boxes should also be cleaned once every 1-4 weeks with soap and hot water. Wear gloves while cleaning litter boxes. Pregnant women should be especially careful due to zoonotic parasites such as *Toxoplasma gondii*, which can cause miscarriages or birth defects.



Kennel Training

The first few days for a kitten may be a little frightening so it is important that when your new kitten arrives you have a safe spot for them. Choose a quiet place where your kitten can hide and adjust to their new surroundings (you can plug or spray Feliway to help with stress). Over time you can gradually introduce your kitten to the rest of the house. If there are other pets in the house, it might be best to keep them out of the room until you are ready to make controlled, careful introductions.

A kennel is a great place for a kitten to feel safe. You can place it in an area where it is readily accessible, so they can go there whenever they feel the need. You can use a bed, blankets, toys, and treats to make the kennel a more comfortable place to be.

Kennel training early on will provide a less stressful experience in the future when you want to take your kitten on car rides or if they ever have to stay at the vet clinic.





Dental Care

Brushing your cat's teeth may seem like a daunting task but if you keep on top of it you can reduce dental disease in the future. Brushing your cat's teeth is more than just keeping their breath minty fresh. Nearly 90% of cats develop dental problems over their lifetime. Over time, your cat's mouth collects bacteria which can lead to periodontal disease or decay of teeth. Just like in people, plaque should be removed every 24 hours before it becomes too hard to brush off.

How to Brush Your Cat's Teeth

It is a good idea to start when they are young and create a routine for them so that they can get used to you brushing their teeth.

1. Keep sessions short and make it a positive experience for them. You can start by gently massaging your finger along their gums.
2. Use a toothbrush designed for cats; it's smaller than a human toothbrush and has softer bristles. You can also use toothbrushes that you can put on your finger.
3. Use a toothpaste that is designed for cats; human toothpaste will upset your cat's stomach.
4. Try to not press too hard when brushing as it can irritate the gums making them bleed and cause discomfort.



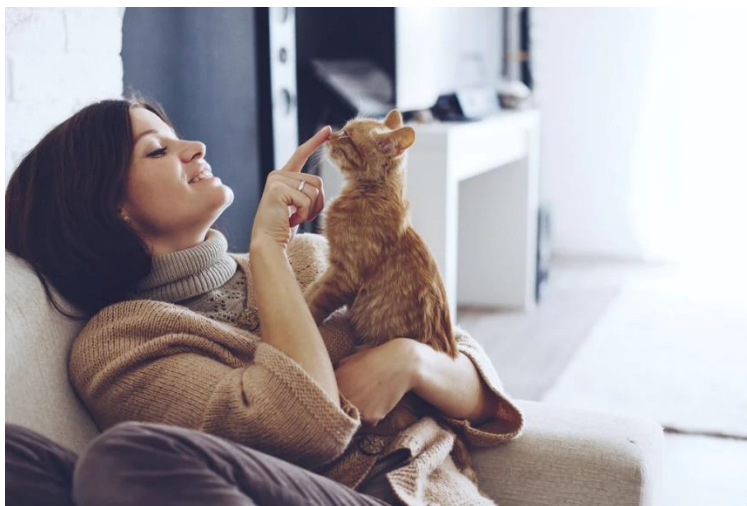


Socialization

Socialization means introducing your kitten to new sights, sounds, textures, and handling by you and family members. Socializing your kitten early will help them become more comfortable with their environment when they are older. Socialization can also help with behavioral problems in the future. Cats who are not well socialized are often fearful and can show aggression in certain situations.

Socialization starts right away when kittens are born. During this stage kittens are like little sponges and absorb all sorts of information regarding their environment. It is imperative that you start socializing right when you get your new kitten, the sooner the better. It all starts at home, getting them used to new sights, smells, and experiences. During this period you should also get them used to being handled. Be sure to touch their paws, ears, tails and mouth so that their experience is pleasant and routine. Your Veterinarian will thank you when your kitten is a star during an exam.

Socializing should be a fun experience for you and your kitten. Bring treats and toys to help make each new interaction a positive one. Some kittens are a bit more shy than others so it is important to go at their pace and not push them. They will eventually get to a point where they are comfortable with their environment.





Grooming

Cats spend most of their time grooming themselves. Even with the best of care, (especially long-haired ones) cats need help to maintain all of their fluff.

It is important to get your kitten used to the brush so that grooming them when they get older is not so much of a chore. Start by presenting the brush to your kitten. Allow them to sniff and give a reward every time he goes near it or touches it. Next try stroking him with the brush, if he lets you, great! If he backs away, allow him to sniff it again and give a treat. Keep doing this, and then you can increase the amount of time you brush him as he gets more comfortable with this.

Depending on if your cat is an indoor or outdoor cat and if they get dirty often, they may need to be bathed. Like everything, it's good to get your kitten used to the idea of a bath so that it is not a fight getting them in the bathtub when they get older. Bath time is also a good time to check the ears for debris. If they are dirty you can clean them with an ear cleaner.



Nail trimming: Seldom do cats like to have their paws touched. Just like everything else, start now. Play with your kitten's paws, rubbing them and handling each one of their toes and giving them a treat each time they do not bite or lick your hand. Then introduce the clippers, let them smell them or paw at them. Then you can start to touch the clippers to the paws. Once you can do that you can try and clip the nail being careful not to cut it too short. Just start by clipping little bits at a time.

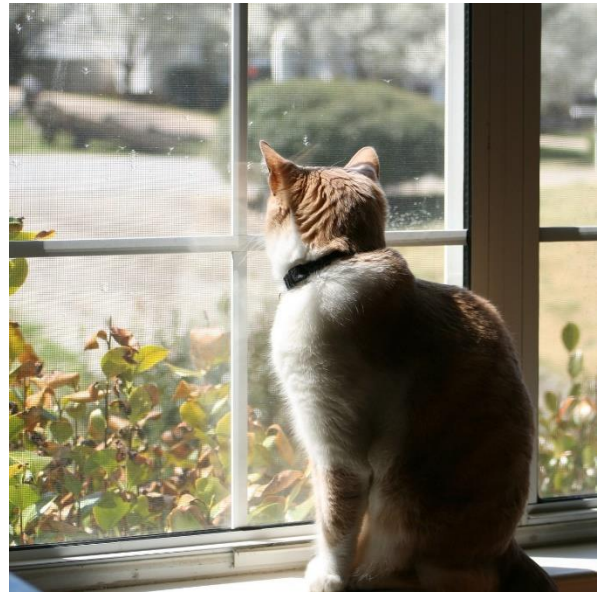


Benefits of Being an Indoor Cat

Why Should You Keep Your Cat Indoors?

Keeping your cat indoors provides a safe environment and peace of mind that your cat is safe. Because of this extra safety, indoor-only cats live significantly longer than cats who spend a lot of time outdoors. This is because outdoor cats face risks like:

- Injury or death by hit by car
- Encounters with wildlife or other pets
- Infections from diseases like feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) or feline leukemia virus (FeLV)
- Ingestion of toxic plants or other toxins such as rodenticide
- Fleas, ticks, worms (internal and external parasites)



Fact: Cats are estimated to kill up to 350 million wild birds per year in Canada alone.

Health Risks for Indoor cats

Although it is safer for cats to be indoors, there are still some things to watch for such as:

- House cats have less opportunities for exercise, which could lead to them becoming overweight. Obese cats are at greater risk of diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.
- While your cat may be safe from toxic substances outside there are still things that are toxic to cats indoors such as plants (ex. lilies) or household substances.
- Cats may develop behavioral problems and become stressed if they are not provided adequate stimulation.



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Keeping Indoor Cats Happy

For indoor cats, it is important to provide exercise and enrichment. You can do this by giving them activities that allow them to express normal cat behaviors such as climbing, scratching, and playing.

Cat toys to consider:

- Food puzzles
- Climbing structures
- Scratching pads
- Catnip toys
- Windows for bird watching



There are some excellent options for getting your cat outside without the risks:

- Using a pet stroller/backpack
- Training your cat to walk on a harness and leash
- Build a safe outdoor enclosure

POISONOUS PLANTS FOR CATS

A Field Guide



SAGO PALM



DAFFODILS



AUTUMN CROCUS



HYACINTH



AZALEAS



DIEFFENBACHIA



CYCLAMEN



TULIPS



OLEANDER



LILIES



RHODODENDRONS



KALANCHOE



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Cat Resources To Take A Look At:

Ohio State University - For Cat Owners

<https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>

Cat Friendly Homes

<https://catfriendly.com/>

