

Important Information for Kitten Adopters

"The First Few Days...and Beyond!"

Special Instructions for Kitten Adopters

Remember:

Your kitten is new to your home and new to this world! Kittens are only weeks old and they're depending on you for protection.

Here are some hints to help your kitten adapt to your home and grow strong.

- Keep

your kitten indoors-only, preferably forever. Outdoor cats live an average of 2-4 years while indoor cats have long, stress-free lives. Outdoor cats contribute to the transfer of disease among wildlife and kill millions of birds every year. Please make sure your kitten is wearing its ID tag because if your cat escapes from your house, an ID tag will better the chances of him or her being returned to you. Did you know that we receive over 100 lost cats per month? Don't let your kitten be one of those!

- Minimize Stress: Stress

negatively affects the immune system. Kittens are especially susceptible to diarrhea and illness, so it is important to minimize the amount of stress your kitten receives. Keep your kitten healthy by allowing her to sleep as much as she wants, avoid over-handling and introductions to friends, and don't take your kitten to public places. Remember to exercise your kitten when she's awake because exercise can help boost the immune system. Just remember not to overdo it!

- Don't

feed milk: Cow's milk is designed for calves, not kittens. Your kitten cannot digest cow's milk very well, and the resulting diarrhea can quickly cause life-threatening dehydration.

- Feed

quality food: Your kitten's high energy and growth needs require a high quality food like Royal Canin or Innova. Check the label on your kitten food. Cats are carnivores need animal protein sources, not plant protein sources. The first two to three ingredients on the label should be from animals (i.e., Chicken meal, Beef meal, Chicken). Avoid products that list meat by-products (i.e. poultry by-products) as a first or second ingredient. Lower quality foods will have plant protein sources (i.e. corn, corn meal, corn gluten meal, etc.). These will cause the kitten's urine to become alkaline which can lead to urinary tract disorders. Typically foods with plant protein sources also include urine acidifiers like DL methionine or corn gluten meal. While these are adequate, they can affect your kitten's growth. Your kitten will appreciate being fed a diet made of animal protein sources which are naturally acidifying. A higher quality food will also include natural preservatives such as ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E). Examples of synthetic preservatives are

BHT or ethoxyquin which you may want to avoid. Remember that kitten nutrient requirements are different from those of adult cats. Please be sure to offer your kitten the food designed for the correct life stage. Also remember to offer your kitten free-choice dry food and fresh water at all times.

- Feed canned food: To ensure your kitten is eating and to prevent dehydration, start your kitten off with canned food twice a day mixed in with some dry food to help maintain tooth and gum health. Gradually wean your kitten off canned food as s/he grows strong. Remember not to make any sudden changes in your kitten's diet. Doing this will upset your kitten's digestive tract and can lead to diarrhea.

- Keep the litterbox nearby: Active kittens may "forget" where the litterbox is located so be sure to confine your kitten to a small room for the first few days. Gradually increase the amount of space your kitten can explore. Once allowed to roam the house, take your kitten back to the litterbox on a regular basis until you're sure s/he knows how where to go. You may also want to consider adding a second or third litterbox. Kitten's bladders are tiny and they may not be able to make it back to the litterbox if there is only one in the house.

- Kitten-proof your home: Just as you wouldn't leave a toddler unattended in your home, a kitten should be supervised at all times. If left alone during the day, confine your kitten to a bathroom (keep the toilet lid down!) or bedroom. Be aware of dangers such as electrical cords, drapery cords, and small objects that can be swallowed.

- Follow up with your veterinarian: Be sure to take advantage of the FREE post-adoption health exam and seek vet care immediately if your kitten is listless, has diarrhea, or is showing signs of upper respiratory illness (runny nose, sneezing).

Please call us at 970-226-3647 if you have any questions! Congratulations on adopting your new kitten!