

Your New Kitten

Contributed by Web master
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General Care Cats are very adaptable and seem quite happy to spend their life indoors. It is important to provide them with a comfortable bed and a litter tray to use as a toilet. Cats are very clean animals and if the litter tray is not cleaned regularly they will not want to use it. This can lead to urine retention and complications such as cystitis. Dirty litter tray should be handled hygienically. Wash your hands after cleaning the litter tray out. If you are pregnant, get someone else to do it or wear protective gloves. Food and water dishes and utensils used by the cat should be kept separate from those used by the family and should be washed separately. It is probably better to feed cats once or twice a day, at the same times rather than leave food out all the time. As well as being more hygienic, it allows you to check your cat and monitor its appetite more easily. Cats have claws which are quite sharp and which they like to scratch on hard surfaces to keep them healthy. It is a good idea to get them used to a cat scratcher at an early age to stop them damaging carpets and furniture. They can be encouraged to use the scratcher by rubbing it with catnip, a herb which is available from pet shops. We do not consider it ethical to declaw cats.

Diet Because they are growing, young cats need a relatively large amount of food, at least 3 times per day, until they are 5-6 months old. We recommend good quality commercial kitten foods as they contain all the necessary ingredients for growth, including mineral and vitamins. Home made diets, scraps, all fish diets and vegetarian diets can all result in illnesses. Cats do not need milk, but they should always have a fresh supply of water. **Vaccination and Deworming** All kittens need a course of vaccinations starting at about 8 weeks old and an annual booster. Rabies vaccinations should be also given every 3 years. We always worm kittens at the same time as the vaccination and they should also be wormed at regular intervals when they grow up.

- Cat flu and Feline enteritis This is the usual all in one injection
- Feline Leukaemia Feline leukaemia is an increasingly common viral disease which works a bit like the Aids virus in humans. Humans can not catch this virus from cats. The main problems the disease causes is blood disorders and tumours.