

CARING FOR YOUR KITTEN



Worming

Kittens should be wormed from 2 weeks of age at fortnightly intervals until 12 weeks of age. They should then continue to be treated every month until they are six months old. Treatment should then continue at 3 monthly intervals unless advised otherwise. Monthly worming is advised for cats that like to hunt.

Vaccinations

The first vaccine can be given at 9 weeks of age, with a second vaccination given three to four weeks later. It is then recommended to keep the kitten away from other cats for a further 14 days to allow the vaccine to take effect and for the kitten to be safely considered immune. Kittens can play with other cats with a known up to date vaccine status after the first vaccine. The kitten will then just need a booster vaccination once a year.

Flea treatment for kittens

Flea treatment can begin from as early as 2 days of age, depending on the product used.

Frontline Combo (Spot On)

- Can be used from 8 weeks of age and weighing more than 1kg
- Lasts for 5 weeks

Frontline Spray

- Can be used from 2 days of age
- Lasts for 8 weeks

Program Suspension for Injection

- Can be used from weaning onwards
- Lasts for six months

Many others are available but these are the ones that we recommend.

Neutering

Queens

Queens can be speyed from six months of age. They can be speyed at an older age but it should be done between seasons if this is the case.

Main advantages:

- Elimination of heat/season and unsociable behaviour
- No false pregnancies
- No unwanted pregnancies
- Speying at six months is a slightly more straight forward procedure
- Will not develop pyometra
- Less inclined to stray

Disadvantages:

- Due to hormonal changes may be more likely to gain weight

- May be more predisposed to cystitis but a diet designed for neutered cats can help with this

Toms

It is advised to have tomcats castrated from the age of six months onwards.

Main advantages:

- Elimination of unsociable behaviour
- Less inclined to stray
- Less inclined to spray
- Will not sire unwanted kittens
- Testicular and prostate problems eliminated
- May reduce aggression, but not always
- Urine less inclined to smell

Disadvantages:

- Due to hormonal changes may be more likely to gain weight
- May be more predisposed to cystitis and crystal formation, leading to blockages, but a diet designed for neutered cats can help with this

Exercising Kittens

Playing with your kitten is a great form of exercise and helps to develop their natural hunting instincts. Kittens start to play from 4 weeks old, by wrestling with their littermates. By the time kittens are 7-8 weeks old, they will transfer their attention from social play with littermates to predatory play with inanimate objects.

Playing with your kitten every day for just 20 minutes not only provides both physical and mental stimulation but can also strengthen the bond between owner and kitten.

- Set aside time for at least two good play sessions a day. The best time for kittens is in the early morning or evening.
- Play with your kitten before you go to bed so they will be ready to sleep when you are.

- Indulge your cat's hunting behaviour, especially with young indoor cats. Play games that involve an element of chasing and pouncing.
- Solitary kittens may play more roughly with their owners so teach them to control playful nips and scratches by encouraging them to attack toys rather than you.

Feeding Kittens

Needless to say, mother's milk makes the ideal first food as it is naturally rich in all the required nutrients. Although kittens are ready for weaning at 6-8 weeks, most will take an interest in solid foods at 3-4 weeks. This is the ideal time to start offering a kitten food formula. If you choose a dry food it should be moistened, gradually reducing the amount of moisture. With less adventurous kittens, it may be necessary to spread a small amount on their lips to encourage them to give it a try! By the time they reach 10-12 weeks the transition to solid food should be complete.

How much to feed?

Kittens have small stomachs and large appetites, so should be fed little and often.

- ✓ Initially: at least 4 meals a day.
- ✓ As kittens get older, gradually reduce their feeding to 3 meals a day
- ✓ By six months old: 2 meals a day

- ✓ Cats are natural grazers and do not adapt well to being fed one meal a day
- ✓ Cats prefer food that is fed at room temperature, so it's better not to feed wet food direct from the fridge. Leave it to warm up a bit before serving.