

KITTEN CARE

PET CARE SHEET

Kittens have sharp temporary teeth by 8 weeks of age – these are gradually shed at about 6 months to allow the adult teeth to come through. New kittens take a few days to settle in – make sure you have everything ready before your kitten comes home:- Food, bowls, litter tray and litter (preferably the same as the kitten has been using – fine earth litters are the most natural), carrier (top opening carriers are best), toys and scratching post, bed, collar (quick release or elasticated collars are best) and identity tag. Gradually introduce your new kitten to all the sights and sounds of the house – introduce other pets and children carefully supervising the early meetings until you are sure all the animals are friendly, and children know how to handle the kitten gently. Prevent unwanted behaviour eg clawing chairs by firmly saying no. Cats may be kept indoors but will need a scratching post, toys and plenty of human contact. Keep cats in at night as this is the time of most fights and road accidents.

Neutering – Unneutered females start looking for a mate at about 6 months of age - usually during the spring or autumn and will almost certainly become pregnant unless neutered. Toms become sexually active at a bout 5 months of age at which age they will start to spray urine and fight other cats.

We recommend that both sexes are neutered at 6 months of age

Teeth Regular brushing using a paste specially formulated for pets will help to keep teeth healthy – you should start doing this while your kitten is young. Dry foods also help to keep teeth healthy.

Fleas – the most common cause of skin disease in cats causing scratching and loss of coat especially on the back. Flea droppings are often visible against the skin as black specks. Regular treatment of the cat and the house may be required to control fleas – please see our information leaflet on external parasites.

Worms – Kittens must be treated for worms which infect the gut -see internal parasites information sheet

Grooming – Cats like to keep themselves very clean, and brushing and grooming are usually fun, about 6 weeks is a good time to start. Long coated cats may need daily grooming and short coats about once a week. Use a soft bristle brush – combs should only be used very carefully to avoid damaging the skin.

Always wear rubber gloves when cleaning litter trays – pregnant women should probably avoid this task because of a possible risk to unborn children from Toxoplasmosis.

Vaccination Several potentially fatal cat diseases -Feline infectious enteritis, Feline respiratory disease (“Cat flu”) and Feline Leukaemia require vaccination protection. Kittens commence their primary vaccination course at 9 weeks with a 2nd injection at 12 weeks. At the first vaccination, we examine eyes, ears, coat, teeth heart and genitalia and give advice on worm treatment and feeding. We send a booster & health check reminder each year. Annual vaccination is required to maintain protection – the health check allows early disease detection and is an opportunity to discuss health or behaviour problems.

Collar tags can be lost or removed so we recommend that all cats have a small **microchip** inserted between the shoulder blades – ensuring when a cat is lost or injured tracing the owners is quick and easy. Many clients opt to have their cat microchipped at the time of neutering (usually at 6 months of age).

Diet Kittens should be fed a diet specially formulated to meet the demands of growth. We recommend Hill’s kitten food though other diets produced by the major manufacturers are also suitable.

Dry diets are both convenient and economical requiring the owner only to supply a fresh bowl of water Try to keep feeding consistent, do not use a different flavour of food every day and make changes slowly over a few days. Do not overfeed scraps or treats and avoid cows milk as this may cause tummy upsets

6 point health check * Eyes should be clear with no discharge * Bottom should be clean

* Ears should be a healthy pink colour and free of wax or odour * Coat should be sleek and free of white scurf or black flea droppings * Body contour should be smooth and free of lumps and bumps

* Healthy cats drink little if fed wet food, occasional vomiting of grass or hair may be normal – but persistent vomiting or diarrhoea requires veterinary attention

The Shrubbery Veterinary Centre, 65 Perry Street, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 8RD.

Tel: 01474 534891\333141 & 5 The Link New Ash Green Tel: 01474 873370