



# Kitten

## Information Guide

ASK US ABOUT OUR  
PET HEALTH  
CLUB

# A warm welcome to your new kitten!

At Eastcott Vets we are committed to ensuring that your kitten grows into a fit and healthy cat that you and your family can love and enjoy for many years.

This pack is filled with useful basic information and tips. There is a wide range of health care information, resources and frequently asked questions on our website at [www.eastcottvets.co.uk](http://www.eastcottvets.co.uk)



## Kitten's Details

Use this section to make a note of your kitten's details.

Kitten's Name

Breed

Sex

Kitten's Date of Birth

## Vaccinations

Your kitten will receive a full health check prior to vaccination. In addition, you will receive 4 weeks free insurance and a free dose of flea and worm treatment.

Routine kitten vaccinations will protect your kitten against:

**Cat Flu (Calicivirus and Herpes virus):** Cat Flu is a serious and highly infectious respiratory disease that can affect both young and old cats. If contracted early in life these diseases can cause lifelong problems.

**Feline Infectious Enteritis (panleukopaenia):** Feline Infectious Enteritis is a serious viral disease that causes death in most cases. It is now thankfully quite rare as a large proportion of cats are vaccinated.

**Feline Leukaemia:** A viral disease that is invariably fatal once clinical signs develop. It is infectious and studies have indicated that about 1-2 % of healthy cats are infected although it is more common amongst poorly cats.

### When to vaccinate

**8-9 weeks:** Your kitten can be given their first vaccination.

**12 weeks:** Your kitten can be given their second vaccination.

**Kittens over 12 weeks:** Your kitten or an adult cat can be given a vaccination course at any age after 9 weeks. They will be given 2 vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart.

Kittens should not be allowed out of your house and garden and should not mix with unvaccinated cats until one week after their second injection.



# Early Neutering Package

Get your kitten vaccinated, microchipped and neutered at a reduced price.

- 8-10 weeks – 1st vaccination, health check, free dose of flea treatment, worming treatment and 4 weeks free insurance.
- 12 weeks – 2nd vaccination, neuter (spay or castrate) & microchip.
- Free post op check-up 3-5 days post-surgery.

To qualify for this package cats must receive their 2nd vaccination, neuter and microchip by 4 months of age.



## Booster Vaccinations

Booster Vaccinations are vital to maintain immunity. They are given annually a year from the date of the second vaccination. Your cat will receive a full health examination when they visit for their annual booster vaccination.

Rabies vaccinations are given to cats that are travelling outside the UK for holidays. Please ask a member of staff for details or visit <https://www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad/overview>

# Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are irritating and stubborn parasites that can cause considerable discomfort to our pets. Regular use of a preventative flea product is especially important as once fleas have established themselves in a home they can be very difficult to eliminate.

There is now an array of different ways of tackling fleas and ticks in cats and kittens including spot ons, tablets and sprays. Some will help control worms and other parasites. You will be advised on the best products according to your kitten's age, type of parasites, ease of use and lifestyle. We would always advise using a prescription veterinary medication over shop

bought products. NEVER use dog flea products on your cat. Some products are toxic to cats and can prove to be fatal. You may be advised to use a household flea spray to ensure that all stages of the flea lifecycle are eliminated. Much of the lifecycle of the flea is lived off your cat and in your home.



# Worming

Kittens can be born with a roundworm infection and by 3 weeks of age they can be shedding worm eggs in their faeces. As they groom themselves they continually re-infect themselves meaning that regular worm treatment from a young age is important.

Veterinary wormers can be given as tablets, paste or 'spot-on' preparations (a liquid applied to the skin). Not all wormers kill all common types of worms so it is important to seek the advice of a vet. The vet will prescribe a suitable wormer for your kitten based on age, weight, type of worm infection and ease of use. Tapeworms do not often cause problems in young kittens unless they have a severe flea infestation (the flea is part of the tapeworm life cycle).

## Worming Regimes

**Cats aged 4 weeks to 6 months** should be wormed monthly.

**Cats aged 6 months onwards** should be wormed every 3 months.

Wormers eliminate worms that are present at the time, they do not offer long-term protection. A cat can be wormed one day and then pick worm eggs up the very next day. Worming regularly means that any developing worms will be killed whilst very small. If

you don't see worms in your cat's faeces, it does not mean that they don't have any. They may well be shedding microscopic eggs. Cats that hunt or have fleas are likely to pick up tapeworms more often than others.

# Feeding

It is important not to make any sudden dietary changes in the initial settling in period if your kitten is stable on its food. Any changes should be gradual to avoid upsetting their digestion.

## How Often

**8-12 weeks:** 4 meals daily

**12-20 weeks:** 3 meals daily

**20 weeks plus:** 2 meals daily

## What to feed

Cat food has become increasingly more sophisticated (and to some extent confusing) and there is a diet to suit every cat at each stage of their life depending on size and state of health. We will be happy to advise you on the appropriate diet for your cat. Always start with a kitten / growth diet. There is a choice between dry, semi moist and moist (tinned or sachet food). There are advantages and disadvantages of each type. For instance, cats that eat tinned food

rarely develop bladder problem yet they are more susceptible to dental disease through the accumulation of tartar. Some dry foods, especially the cheaper varieties can predispose to bladder disease that may cause significant problems.

## How much to feed

Guidance is usually given with the food. As a guide kittens can be given all that they can consume in 15-20 minutes. Remember this is only a guide and individual kittens may vary in their requirements. Cats do not like stale food and so any uneaten food should be removed. Many adult cats are "ad lib" feeders and return to their bowl for small meals at regular

intervals. This can lead to obesity especially in house cats that often pick at food for want of something else to do. Obesity in cats is a growing problem and can cause serious disease so please consult us if you are concerned that your pet is becoming overweight. We run free nurse clinics to help in these cases so call us if you are concerned.

Once your kitten is weaned it does not need milk. Many cats cannot tolerate cow's milk and so this can be a common cause of diarrhoea. If you wish to feed milk, you could use one that is specially formulated for cats.

# Litter Training Kittens

Cats are very private creatures so the litter box should be sited in a quiet spot to offer privacy. Cats do not like to toilet where they eat so a litter box should not be placed near feeding bowls. It may be necessary to confine the area that the kitten has access to until toileting is more reliable. You should show your kitten the litter box just as soon as you bring him/her home. Place them in the litter box when they wake up, after they have eaten and before bed. Cats like their trays nice and tidy and they have an excellent sense of smell so change soiled litter frequently to encourage them to use the tray and prevent soiling elsewhere in the house.

When a kitten is looking for a suitable corner to use as a toilet it will start sniffing, scratching and will begin to crouch. It is best to catch them at this stage if you can, and place him directly in the litter box. Never scold the kitten or rub its nose in an 'accident'. It is best to try and avoid accidents to begin with.

If your kitten should have an accident on the floor, clean it immediately. It is best NOT to use any cleaner with an ammonia smell as cats may mistake the smell as a suitable place to go to the toilet.

Pregnant women should always take sensible precautions when dealing with soiled litter to avoid the small chance of toxoplasmosis infection. Wear gloves or, better still, get someone else to do it!

# Going Outside & Microchipping

Your kitten can be allowed supervised access to your garden once vaccinations are complete or earlier if other cats do not come in to your garden. Once your kitten is confident of its surroundings and is sure to return when called, the time allowed outdoors can be increased. Contrary to popular belief, it is best for cats not to be left out at night. This is when many cats are hit by cars or get into fights over territory.

Collars can be useful in identifying your cat and allowing access to cat flaps. However, collars are easily lost and should not be relied upon for identification. We would strongly advise microchipping all cats, including house cats for identification purposes. A microchip is an electronic chip the size of a rice grain that is inserted into the scruff of the neck by injection. This remains in your pet throughout its life, with a pet's unique identity number being kept on a central register. Found cats

can be scanned for a microchip and the owner can be contacted. You can buy cat flaps that are activated by a cat's microchip. These are useful for keeping the local cats out.

Kittens can be microchipped from 8 weeks of age.

If using a collar, they should fit snugly with room for two fingers to be inserted around the neck. They should have a quick release buckle rather than elastic as these can cause injury. Quick release buckles

will break open and fall off if a cat becomes snagged. Reflective collars offer added safety if your cat is out after dark.



## Neutering – Female (Spay)

There is currently a huge overpopulation of cats and unless purchased specifically for breeding purposes we would therefore recommend that all cats be spayed. Your cat will also benefit from protection against mammary (breast) cancer, ovarian and uterine tumours and also pyometra, a potentially fatal womb infection. She will also be less likely to stray to find a mate and therefore less likely to be involved in a road traffic accident. Many cats cry out or ‘call’ quite noisily when in season and this will end after she has been spayed. There is no advantage in letting your kitten have a litter before she is spayed. Female cats can be spayed from 12 weeks of age.

Kittens can fall pregnant as young as 4 months and we advocate **Early Neutering for cats.**

### Early Neutering Package

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- 8-10 weeks – 1st vaccination, health check, free dose of flea treatment, worming treatment and 4 weeks free insurance.

- 12 weeks – 2nd vaccination, neuter (spay or castrate) & microchip.
- Free post op check-up 3-5 days post-surgery.

**To qualify for this package cats must receive their 2nd vaccination, neuter and microchip by 4 months of age.**

## Neutering – Male (Castration)

Castrating a cat will help stop various unwanted behaviour including ‘spraying’ (urine marking) indoors and will also help reduce aggression towards other cats and therefore he will be less likely to suffer from fight wounds including abscesses. Castrated males are also less likely to stray over long distances. It is no coincidence that a large percentage of cats involved in road traffic accidents are un-castrated males.

Male cats can be castrated from 12 weeks of age. Your cat will spend the day at the surgery and will require a short period of rest at home following the operation.

Please see details of our **Early Neutering Package** on page 10.



# Introducing a kitten to an existing cat

Scent is the most important of the cat's senses in terms of communication and wellbeing. Letting your kitten get used to the new smells of the house and other cats before the first encounter is a good idea. During this time keep the cat(s) kittens in separate rooms allowing each to investigate the other's room, smells and bedding without actually meeting. Be led by body language and behaviour and allow more contact as both parties show signs of relaxation and acceptance.

You can manage introductions by using a pet carrier or cat basket. Place the kitten in the carrier or basket above ground level and let the other cat come into the room. Again, be led by behaviour and body language before allowing the kitten out. It is rare for an adult cat to attack a kitten. However, it is safer to supervise introductions. When the kitten and other cats meet face to face, ensure there are

places to hide or get out of reach should either party feel threatened. There should be enough bowls, litter trays and beds for each cat so that there is no conflict around access to essentials.

Do not force meetings but accept that things may take a little gradual acceptance - this may take several days or weeks, depending on the individual cats.

A Feliway pheromone, or Pet Remedy essential oils plug in diffuser can be very useful in reducing stress in the household during this introductory period. Please ask for more information.

# Routine Health Checks at Home

These will help to keep your cat in good health and also get your cat used to being handled, making examinations by the vet less traumatic.

**Ears** – Your cat's ears should be clean and odour free. A black discharge or strong odour indicates there is a problem. There is no need to clean your cat's ears unless a vet has advised you to.

**Teeth** – Regular brushing with a veterinary toothpaste will, along with a good diet, help keep your cat's teeth clean and breath fresh. Whilst your kitten doesn't necessary need its teeth clean from a young age, getting your kitten used to a toothbrush and paste will make tooth brushing easy when they are adults.

**Eyes** – Eyes should be clear, bright and free from discharge. Signs of pain are redness, watering and squinting. It is advisable to have sore eyes checked by a vet promptly in order to avoid longer term issues.

**Nose** – It is quite normal for noses to be slightly wet and drip a small amount of clear liquid. There should be no discharge or excessive sneezing. A dry nose providing it is not cracked is quite normal too.

**Grooming** – It is good idea to get your kitten used to being groomed from an early age, particularly if it

is long-haired. Grooming keeps the coat tangle free, removes excess hair and also gives you a chance to keep a close eye on your cat's general health and body condition and check for parasites such fleas and ticks.





**Open 24 hours**

**Clinic & Hospital**

Edison Park, Dorcan Way,  
Swindon SN3 3FR

**Bath Road Clinic**

59 Bath Road, Old Town,  
Swindon SN1 4AU

**Cricklade Road Clinic**

6 Clive Parade, Cricklade Road,  
Swindon SN2 1AJ

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**[www.eastcottvets.co.uk](http://www.eastcottvets.co.uk)**