



Eastcott Vets

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 wide range of health care information, resources and frequently asked questions on our website at www.eastcottvets.co.uk



Kitten's Details

Use this section to make a note of your kittens details and pass this on to your vet.

Kitten's Name

Breed

Sex

Kitten's Date of Birth

Vaccinations

Kittens must be healthy at the time of vaccination, so will be given a free health check for your peace of mind. You will also receive up to 4 weeks free insurance and a free dose of flea and worm treatment.

Routine kitten vaccinations (including a full health check) 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 (panleukopaemia). 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 is 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.

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.

Booster Vaccinations are vital to maintain immunity and are given annually a year from the date of the second vaccination. This is a single injection. 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

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.

Veterinary flea spot on treatments are very effective but should not be used on kittens less than 2kg or under 8 weeks. There is an effective spray that can be prescribed by the vet for kittens that is safe to use from the age of 2 weeks.

Veterinary spot on flea treatments should be used every month for fleas. Some will help control ticks, worms and other parasites. Ticks can attach but will die quickly preventing the ability to transmit disease. You will be

advised on the best products for your cat's lifestyle.

You may be advised to use and 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.

Flea collars are popular but some won't actually kill fleas and they are rarely as effective as prescription spot-on treatments.

NEVER use dog flea products on your cat. Some pet shop products are toxic to cats and can prove to be fatal.



Worming

Most kittens are born with a roundworm infection and by 3 weeks old 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 worms 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 need to be wormed monthly.

Cats aged 6 months onwards need to 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 it's 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 use one that is specially formulated for cats.



Litter Training Kittens

A kitten that is not old enough to go outside or who is to be an inside pet should begin learning to use the litter box immediately. The box should be filled with enough litter for the cat to be able to scratch in.

The litter box should be placed in a quiet spot to offer privacy. Cats are very private creatures and covered litter trays are available, we would recommend these. It should not be placed near the cat's feeding bowls as they do not like to dirty or mess their feeding area. 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 the kitten in the litter box when they wake up, after they have eaten and before bed.

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 him 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 the cat may mistake the

smell as a suitable place to go to the toilet. 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.

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

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 then the time allowed outdoors can be increased. It is advised that they are kept in at night. 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 in our experience is that any trauma will often lead to the collar being lost so they should not

be relied upon for identification and we would strongly advise a microchip. Any collars should fit snugly with room for two fingers around the neck and have a quick release buckle rather than elastic that can cause injury. This means that when pressure is applied to the collar, it will break open and fall off. Collars that are reflective offer added safety if your cat is out after dark.



Micro Chipping

A microchip is an electronic tag 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, and your pet's unique identity number is kept on a central register. All Vets, catteries and animal rescue homes have an electronic scanner. Every found cat is routinely scanned and if a microchip is present the owner can be traced through the central directory. You can buy cat flaps that are activated by a cat's microchip. These are useful for keeping the local cats out! We would suggest that a microchip is vital for all cats that leave the house.



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 another 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 lead 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 lead 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.

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.

Cats can fall pregnant as young as 6 months. We therefore normally advise people to have their cats spayed from 5-6 months of age. There is no advantage in letting your kitten have a litter before she is spayed. She will

require a full anaesthetic and will spend the day at the surgery requiring approximately 10 days rest after the operation. Please ask for more information on this procedure.

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 further distances. It is no coincidence that a large percentage of cats involved in road traffic accidents are un-castrated males.

We normally advise people to have their cats castrated from 5-6months of age. He will require a full anaesthetic and will spend the day at the surgery requiring a short period of rest at home following the operation.



Routine Health Checks At Home

This will help 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 it’s 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.

Nose - It is quite normal for noses to drip clear liquid, providing there is 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 as fleas and ticks.

Pet Insurance

The ongoing progress of veterinary medicine means that as diagnosis and treatment improves costs may continue to rise. An insurance policy is a sensible way in which to begin planning for unforeseen bills that could be very significant. The same rules apply to buying a pet policy as your own health insurance policy - buy it when young and healthy and there are no existing conditions to report. Read the small print carefully and take particular notice of the terms and conditions that will explain what is and what is not covered together with any excess payments that may be required.

In general, diagnosis and treatment for any accident, injury, or illness, will be covered by the policy providing the illness was not present prior to the inception of the policy. Treatment for dental disease is often not covered. Third Party Liability is an important benefit to protect pet owners against being sued if their pet causes damage or injury.

Insurance premiums will vary according to risk and the level of cover offered. An expensive pedigree will command a much higher premium than a cross breed. Before taking out a policy it is worth checking with our insurance advisor to ensure that you have not chosen one of the few companies with whom we will not deal with directly.

We would advise you to look at companies that offer 'life time policies' these will provide cover for long-term and recurring conditions.

Please ask if you would like more information on Pet Insurance



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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