



Village Vet

EMERGENCY
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HOUR



Your Kitten

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Congratulations on your new kitten!

Village Vet are here to help you as much as possible to establish a strong, loving relationship with your kitten. We offer a 30 minute consult after which you will know everything there is to know about kittens, their behaviour, training, how to interact and bond with your kitten, Kitten care, diet, vaccines, worming, fleas, grooming and more.

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Why choose Village Vets?

As with human medicine, advances are continually being made in pet care. Many new treatments offer substantial benefits for the well-being of your pet. Our philosophy is that our clients and pets should benefit from the best treatment and care available. We provide this through the extra qualifications and specialisations our vets have achieved, the experience of our nursing staff, the high standard of equipment and facilities and the use of the best surgical materials available.

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Vaccinations

To provide protection against potentially fatal infections such as feline infectious enteritis and feline influenza, kittens need to be vaccinated. The first injection in the course is given at eight weeks old and a second at about 12 weeks. The kitten should be kept away from other cats and stay indoors for seven days after the second injection to ensure maximum protection. To keep up the level of protection provided by vaccination, adult cats require

regular boosters (usually one every one to three years). We will tailor the vaccination programme according to the risks of the various diseases.

Village Vet use a vaccine that contains no adjuvants and can be split up into different components thereby allowing the vets to tailor a vaccine protocol to suit your cat.

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Worming

Worms can make kittens weak. Kittens should be treated against roundworms at 4-6 weeks and then regularly every 4 weeks until they are 6 months old. After this worming they should be treated for roundworms and tapeworms every 3-4 months depending on how much they hunt and if they have fleas.

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Fleas

Even clean cats pick up fleas so check for these while grooming. Flea dirt can usually be seen as small brown specks particularly around the neck and base of the tail. When placed on damp cotton wool 'flea dirt' slowly dissolves producing bloody streaks.

For effective control, adult fleas on the kitten must be killed and reinfestation from the environment prevented. Traditional flea preparations - sprays, shampoos and collars - can contain substances that are potentially toxic to kittens and may not be very effective. We can supply a number of products to kill fleas that are very safe because they act as receptors that are not present in mammals, only in insects. The 'spot-on' products are very easy to apply and can be used from a young age.

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Neutering

A male cat can be castrated from five months of age. Neutering will reduce the likelihood that he will spray indoors to mark his territory. He will also spend less time roaming in search of mates and thus has less of a chance of being run over by a car or getting into fights. Cats which are bitten and scratched in fights are more likely to be at risk from infectious diseases.

A female kitten needs to be spayed to prevent unwanted kittens. This can be undertaken at 6 months of age. She does not need to have a litter before she is spayed. Spaying has no harmful effects and removes the stress on both you and your cat brought on by calling (the loud meowing which female cats make to attract a mate), pregnancy, birth and the care and rehoming of kittens.

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Diet

When you first take a kitten home feed it on the same food it has been used to. A sudden change of diet combined with the stress of adapting to a new home can cause stomach upsets and diarrhoea. If you want to change the diet, do so gradually by mixing it with the kitten's usual food. Kittens have small stomachs and have to be fed little and often, like babies. It can be very difficult to put together a homemade diet which provides all the nutrients required by growing kittens - it is a great deal easier to feed a good quality commercial kitten food. There are foods which have been specially formulated for kittens because they have different nutritional needs to the fully grown cat. Village Vet will advise you on the best, complete diet for your kitten.

Kittens aged 8-12 weeks need four meals a day, 3-6 months three meals, and kittens over 6 months old, two meals. You may want to provide some dry food on an ad lib basis - it depends very much on your lifestyle, what your kitten likes and is used to and if you have other cats in the house with certain feeding routines and habits.

Do not give your kitten cow's milk as it can cause diarrhoea. If you wish to feed milk use one that is specially formulated for cats. Diarrhoea that persists for more than 24 hours requires veterinary attention. Fresh drinking water should be available at all times and it is always a good idea to add a few bowls of water around the home.

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Toileting

Cats are very fussy about their toilet habits and kittens will usually have learnt to use a litter tray by copying their mother. You may just need to show your new kitten where the litter tray is and place it on the tray on waking up from a sleep and after meals, or when the kitten is sniffing, scratching or beginning to crouch and looks as if it is about to go!

You will need a plastic litter tray which can be filled with cat litter. You may intend to let the kitten outdoors at a later stage, an indoor litter tray is always recommended as it will provide

the cat with additional security when toileting. You may want to purchase one of the covered types with a lid which gives the cat more privacy, stops smells from escaping and prevents mess with the litter.

Place the tray in a quiet accessible corner where your kitten will not be disturbed. Make sure that the litter tray is not next to food and water bowls.

The litter tray must be kept clean and emptied regularly. Some disinfectants which go cloudy in water are toxic to cats, so use only hot water and detergent when cleaning out the tray or ensure you use a cat-friendly disinfectant such as bleach which has been diluted as the manufacturer recommends and the tray rinsed thoroughly before use.

If your kitten is inclined to mess elsewhere in the house, confine it to one room with a litter tray until the kitten learns to use it regularly. Place the kitten on the litter tray a short time after it has eaten or when it is sniffing, scratching, beginning to crouch and generally showing signs of looking for a suitable corner to use as a toilet.

If the kitten is reluctant to use the tray it could be because:

- It is not clean enough - empty it more often
- It is not big enough - it should be big enough for an adult cat to turn around in and to use more than once without getting dirty
- You have cleaned it out with a chemical that is too strong smelling
- It is too near the bed or food bowls
- The kitten does not like the texture of the litter you have chosen - revert to the type it has used before.

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Grooming

It is a good idea to accustom your kitten to being groomed from an early age, particularly if it has a long fur. A long-haired cat needs daily attention to keep fur free of tangles. Grooming removes excess loose hairs which can cause fur balls to build up in the stomach. Combing and brushing will help remove these hairs and it is usually appreciated by the cat, provided it has been accustomed to grooming early in life. Grooming also gives you a chance to keep a close eye on your cat, assess its health and help to develop the bond between you. Touch therapy has positive effects on well being. Always be gentle and make grooming a rewarding experience.

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Entertainment

The first 20 weeks are the formative period in your kitten's life. This is the time to build the bond with your kitten. Kittens are very playful. Give them an assortment of toys to keep them occupied and exercised. We will provide you with advice on which toys to choose.

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Scratching

This is completely normal communicative behaviour for cats. Therefore, it is best to provide them with various scratching posts to give them an outlet for this behaviour instead of using your sofa!

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Identification

We offer pet identity tags and a microchip service.

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Indoor versus outdoor

Your kitten should not be allowed outside until at least a week after it has finished its first course of vaccinations. Once it is fully vaccinated and has become used to life in your house, you can start to let your kitten go outside. Choose a dry day and a quiet time and accompany your kitten outside, allowing it to explore the new environment. Continue to accompany the kitten until it is used to your garden and can find its way back to the house without difficulty. It is best not to leave your kitten outside alone until it is 6 months old.

Cats like to come and go as they please. A cat flap allows them to do this. If you fit a cat flap you won't need a litter tray indoors when the kitten grows up. You can teach your kitten to use a cat flap by propping it open initially and enticing it through with food. Gradually close it down so the kitten learns to push the flap. If you already own a cat be aware that the kitten may watch and learn and let itself outside before you are ready - kittens learn quickly by watching other cats. We always advise a magnetic or electronic cat flap to prevent neighbourhood cats from coming into your house.

If you have decided to keep your cat indoors, you will need to provide plenty of stimulation to prevent boredom and frustration.

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Hazards in the home

Owning a kitten is very similar to having a toddler around. Kittens are very inquisitive and will investigate small places which they can crawl into. Keep the washing machine and tumble dryer door shut when not in use and check them before putting the clothes in.

For this reason, should your kitten go missing for any length of time, you should look in cupboards, wardrobes, outside sheds etc in case it has accidentally been shut in or got stuck.

Remove any plants which may be poisonous, for example Dieffenbachia (dumb cane), Poinsettia, Lily of the Valley, Christmas Cherry, Castor Oil plant, Avocado plant, Rubber plant and Ivy. Most cats will not touch such plants but kittens may be more inquisitive.

If you live in a flat above ground level or have a house with several storeys keep the windows shut to ensure that kittens do not fall out.

Outdoors keep garden chemicals stored safely and take care if using slug bait or chemicals on the garden itself - some types can be very toxic to animals.

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International travel

Village Vet can issue your pet a passport, this is an involved process and your vet will carefully go through the requirements with you.

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Emergency care

If your pet is in distress, whether through the sudden onset of an illness, or through accident, it's important to get vet care as soon as possible. Waiting until 'normal business hours' not only prolongs the animal's suffering, but it may make the complaint worse, or cause permanent damage.

We are available at all times for 24 hour accident and emergency care.

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Quick guide to symptoms

It is very difficult to diagnose without examining your pet. We suggest you contact us if any of these symptoms present themselves:

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Frequent diarrhoea
- Persistent cough
- Abnormal breathing
- Excessive drinking of water
- Frequent urination
- Straining when urinating or defecating
- Lumps and swellings
- Bad breath or any unusual odours
- Weight loss or gain
- Head shaking
- Hair loss
- Excessive scratching
- Any unusual discharge or passing of blood
- Persistent vomiting
- Excessive pawing at the ears
- Any emergency situation e.g. convulsions
- Sudden change of behaviour
- A change in walking or running gait

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[More information about your kitten](#)