



**P & K Pets
Info Sheet #15**

19 Magill Rd

Stepney

SA 5069

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www.pkpets.com.au

INFORMATION

KITTEN CARE





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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations and thank you for purchasing a kitten from P & K Pets. Your kitten has been carefully selected to ensure it is healthy and free from disease or ailments. While at P & K Pets, your kitten has been checked, wormed and flea treated. Your kitten comes with a free vet check and a limited warranty.

HOUSING

Your kitten will need its own food and water dishes, a litter box and supplies, a cat carrier, nail clippers, a scratching post, some kitten toys, food, and bedding.

When you first take your kitten home, you should keep it indoors for 7 to 10 days to enable it to become familiar with the surroundings. You will also need to observe your kitten for the first couple of times you let them explore outside. If you do allow your cat to roam outside, you need to be aware of any local native concerns. It is your responsibility to protect your local environment and wild life. If you live near a park etc you should not allow your cat outside, or install a cat run or clear net type of system to contain them in your yard. Our native wild life is completely defenceless against cats.



Houseplants are very attractive to cats, but many plants are poisonous. Check your plants regularly and observe your kitten to ensure they are not chewing or consuming any. Make sure you get rid of those that could harm your cat or appear to be a problem. Also check your cat hasn't decided to use the soil in any of your pots as a litter tray. This is quite common, and these plants may need to be relocated outside until the rules are set.



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Your home can be a dangerous place for a kitten if unprepared. Toxic substances are even more dangerous for cats than dogs because cats live up to their reputation for curiosity and they groom themselves thoroughly. Be sure that cleaning products, motor oil, antifreeze, brake fluid and other household and automotive chemicals are stored in tightly closed containers. If any of these substances are spilled, clean them up immediately. Let floors dry after using household chemicals to clean them as cats can become ill from simply licking their paws after walking on newly cleaned, wet floors. And never put rodent bait where your cat can find it.



Medicines can be another source of toxicity as medications that are safe for humans may not be safe for cats. Keep medicine containers closed tightly and away from your pet. Never give your kitten or cat any medication unless it is prescribed or approved by your veterinarian.

FEEDING

Giving your kitten a well balanced diet is essential. Premium kitten foods provide all the necessary vitamins and minerals required for healthy growth till adulthood. There is no need to add calcium or any other supplements to premium foods. Read the information carefully on any products you purchase and ensure you are feeding the correct amount for your kitten's size and weight. Your P & K Pets kitten will come with some of its existing diet to ensure it gets the correct nutrition. If you plan to change to another brand or diet, you can gradually mix the new diet with the current one until it runs out. This enables your kitten's stomach to adjust to different food, and should be done whenever you change from one brand to another. Sudden changes in diet may cause diarrhoea, and lead to dehydration. If diarrhoea lasts for more than 24hours, please seek veterinary advice.

Do NOT feed your kitten milk (unless it's a kitten formula). This too can cause diarrhoea.



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Feeding schedule: (approx)

- 6 to 8 weeks: Divide the recommended daily feeding into 4 feeds per day. Kitten's of this age may still be weaning. P & K Pets does not normally sell kittens younger than 8 weeks.
- 2 to 4 months: Do the same but reduce to 2 feeds per day
- 4 months on: 1 feed per day (can use an auto feeder also)

Water should ALWAYS be available and fresh! This includes everywhere your kitten goes, inside, outside, in the car or visiting others.

LITTER TRAINING

If you have other cats, buy a new litter box for the kitten. A small one that it can easily climb in is good for starters. Fill the box with a good non-scented, non-clumping litter to the depth of three or four inches (normal clumping cat litter is fine after 3 or 4 months). Place the litter box in a quiet, private place away from their food dish, but easily accessible. Immediately after feeding your kitten, pick it up and gently place it in the litter box. Scratch the litter a little with your fingers so they can get the idea. If it goes, praise your kitten profusely. If it doesn't, watch it closely for indications of wanting to go elsewhere. The instant you see it squatting, pick it up and gently place it in the litter box. Never throw or scold your kitten as it will only associate the box with unpleasant memories. Every time they use the box, praise profusely. You want to associate the box usage with pleasure.

Keep the box immaculately clean, by scooping it several times a day and changing the litter. Be sure to wash and disinfect the box at least twice weekly.

Do not keep your cat locked up in your bedroom at night, away from the litter box as cats can't hold it all night. Once you've found a good litter box location, don't change it. Subtle changes can often cause a cat to forget its previous training.

GROOMING

You can use grooming time as an occasion to practice your bonding. Most cats love to be combed and brushed, once they realize how good it feels. (Have you ever turned down a good back-rub or back-scratching?)



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Brushing: For shorthaired kittens, a slicker brush will do, but be gentle with your strokes. Very young cats or fragile-haired cats such as Rex or Sphynx breeds can be gently groomed with a glove made for that purpose. A pin brush or fine-toothed comb is more appropriate for longhaired cats, and the comb can also be used for checking for fleas in cats of any hair length.



Bathing: Most kittens do not need bathing, unless you are seriously preparing a kitten for showing at a cat show. Young kittens can chill easily, so great care is necessary to keep them warm until thoroughly dried.

Teeth Cleaning: Dental care is a breeze, but in most cases not really necessary. "Finger brushes" are available at veterinary offices and pet stores, and should be used with a paste made for cats. Some kitty toothpaste even comes in fish flavours. Ask your vet for further instructions.

Nail Trimming: Properly socialized kittens will be open to nail trimming, if you approach it casually. Be sure to use very sharp trimmers. You can buy these at a pet store. You only need to clip the tiny tip of the nail. Be very careful not to cut into the pink "quick", or darker part of the nail, as it will cause bleeding. If bleeding does occur, have some styptic powder or corn flour handy and apply it to the bleeding nail.

SOCIALIZATION

If you have no other pets, then socializing is easy. Without doubt you will spend a lot of time with your new kitten, and there won't be any other considerations. Ensure you play with all of your kitten extensively, including their mouth, ears, tail and feet. This technique not only helps the bonding process, but also gets the kitten accustomed to being handled, which will be invaluable later with dental care, brushing, and veterinary examinations. While still a kitten, you should introduce it to as many different scenarios as possible, this includes other people, other animals, noises (blender, vacuum etc), the car and more.



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It's another matter entirely, however, if you have existing dogs and/or cats in your family. First, it's important to quarantine the new kitten. Put your kitten in a separate safe room for a couple of days. Make sure it has its own bed, food, water dish, and litter box. You can gradually open the door to the safe room leaving a small crack, this will allow the other cats or dogs to sniff and peek in. Rub the kitten with a towel to impart scent on it, then put the towel in the sleeping area of your existing cats or dogs, so they'll become accustomed to the smell. Reverse the tactic by giving your kitten a towel or blanket with the scent of your other animals. In a couple of days you can put your kitten in a carrier and allow the other pets to come in and sniff. Expect a bit of growling and hissy-spitty behaviour at first, particularly with other cats as it's instinctive. Soon within a week or two, the bunch of them should settle down and be getting along just fine. The key is not to rush things, and to give both sides a lot of individual attention in the interim. In no time at all, your kitten will be part of your family.

Kittens will scratch furniture and carpeting. It's a natural instinct, as they are learning to sharpen their claws. Fortunately, they can be deterred from ruining your furniture and drapes by giving them their very own scratching post. Buy (or build) a sturdy one, preferably bound with sisal, rather than carpet. Show your kitten how to scratch on it, and if you find it scratching in forbidden territory, gently pick the kitten up and place them at the post. They'll quickly get the message. Be sure to praise profusely for being a good kitten.

GENERAL

By now, you are well on your way to having a happy, well-adjusted kitten. Your new kitten will soon become a very important member of your family. Expect your bonds to strengthen and grow, and enjoy this first year. Like children, they grow up entirely too soon. At the end of the first year your kitten will actually be about 15 years old in human years. They will age four human years for every one normal year after they turn 2, or 24 in cat years. i.e. at 14 they will be equivalent to 72!

Enjoy your new Kitten!

