

Caring for your **Cat or Kitten**

Taking care of a cat or kitten is a big job! Find out what supplies you will need and what responsibilities you will have to take care of your new best friend.

Supplies Needed

- Balanced, brand name food. Not generic! Make sure it's for the right age. Dry food is better for your pet's teeth. Canned food is more similar to a natural diet for cats, so some of both is probably best.
- Food and water bowls. Ceramic and metal are best. Some pets are sensitive to plastic.
- Cat toys – make sure there aren't any small parts or string that can fall off and be swallowed
- A cat brush
- Cat toothpaste and toothbrush
- "Breakaway" collar and ID tag
- Microchip both indoor and outdoor cats
- Scratching post or scratching pad
- Litter box – one per cat, plus one extra
- Litter – scoopable litter is best. Don't use dusty or perfumed litter.
- Cat carrier
- Cat nail clippers
- Optional: Cat condo, cat leash and harness, cat bed, cat "plants"

Feeding Your Cat/Kitten

- Kittens (under 6 months): 3-4 times a day
- Over 6 months : Feed twice a day (amount depends on food type and how active your cat is)
- Training your cat to eat twice a day: When your kitten turns 6 months old, offer food to him/her twice a day only. Leave the food out for ½ hour only. Your cat will quickly learn to eat all of his/her food during the half hour.
- Avoid giving your pet too many treats since cats can become overweight as they age

Dangers! Never Feed Your Cat/Kitten:

- Alcoholic drinks
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Grapes and raisins
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Onions, garlic and chives
- Bones
- Tomato plants
- Unripe fruit
- Yeast dough
- Any houseplants – some are poisonous



Chores

Daily

- Clean litter box, feed (see above)
- Clean water/food bowls
- Change water
- Play with your cat
- Walk (optional)

Weekly

- Thoroughly clean the litter box using a mild soap and replace litter
- Brush teeth once

Two Times a Week

- Brush hair (gently)

Monthly

- Check to see if nails need to be trimmed

Yearly

- Have your parent or guardian take your cat to veterinarian for a check-up

Training

You can train your cat to walk on leash by using a leash or harness made for cats, by starting in a fenced-in yard and rewarding them for good behavior with treats. You can also train your cat to use a scratching post by placing catnip around the base of the post and rewarding your pet when he/she uses the scratching post. Cats love to scratch!

Brushing Your Cat's Teeth

It is not easy, but cats are healthier if you brush their teeth. Use cat toothpaste and brush. Start when they are kittens, so they get used to it.

Spaying and Neutering

- Female cats should be spayed and male cats neutered by six months old. This reduces bad behavior and some diseases later in life.

Finding the Right Veterinarian

- When you get your pet, have your parent or guardian take it to a veterinarian for a check-up
- Your pet should see a veterinarian at least once a year and when you think it might be sick

Information on taking caring of your cat or kitten provided by Link Welborn, DVM DABVP, of Temple Terrace Animal & Bird Hospital in Tampa, Florida.

