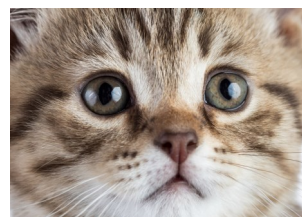


Congratulations on the arrival of your new kitten! Below is some useful information on how to care for your new kitten to keep them healthy and happy.

Vaccinations

Keeping your new kitten safe against infectious diseases is so important and fortunately we can protect them throughout their life. These diseases include cat flu (feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus), feline panleucopenia virus and feline leukaemia virus.

We can begin the kitten vaccination course from 9 weeks of age, with a second injection 3 weeks later. Thereafter, annual booster vaccinations are needed which also provides us with a good opportunity for a thorough health check. One week after their second vaccination they are safe to explore, although we recommend owners keep their kittens indoors or outside only under supervision, until after they are neutered.



Worming

Kittens can be born with a roundworm infection and by around 3 weeks of age they can start shedding worm eggs in their faeces. The main roundworm that affects cats is *Toxocara Cati*, which can be passed onto the kittens while they are still in the womb and after birth in the milk.

We recommend kittens are wormed every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old; then every month until they are 6 months old. Adults should be routinely wormed every three months unless there are very young children or people with poor immune systems in the household, in which case we would recommend more frequent worming.

Wormers only kill worms that are present and they do not offer long-term protection. Cats that hunt or have fleas are likely to pick up tapeworms more often than others. Worms can also cause health problems in humans, which is why it is so important to keep your kitten up to date with worming treatment.

We have several veterinary-approved wormers available, in both tablet and spot-on form, effective against both roundworms and tapeworms. Please enquire at the Welcome Desk or speak to one of our veterinary surgeons about the most appropriate type of wormer to use in your puppy or dog.



Fleas

Fleas are stubborn parasites that can cause irritation to our pet's skin and are a potentially frustrating and expensive problem if your pet becomes infested. Regular treatment is advised as the majority of the flea's life cycle is spent in the home and not on your pet. Our vets will be able to provide you with guidance on the most appropriate flea and tick treatment for your cat. We advise you to use prescription treatments rather than shop bought products.

All cats will pick up fleas at some stage in their lifetime, even if they have been treated, so it is important to keep up to date with their treatment.

Ticks

Ticks are spider-like parasites that suck blood from other animals. They do not jump, instead they climb or drop on your pet's coat. They are common in woodland and grassland. While most tick bites are harmless, heavy infestations on kittens can be dangerous. It is important to keep up to date with treatment.

Feeding

Sensible feeding of the young animal is extremely important. It is important not to make any sudden changes to your kitten's diet, and any changes made must be done gradually to avoid upsetting their stomach. Always start with a kitten/growth diet, this can be either dry or moist food. Many adult cats are 'ad lib' feeders and return to their food bowl throughout the day. This can lead to obesity especially in house cats. We run weight nurse clinics to help, so call us if you are concerned.

Feeding frequency for kittens:

- 8-12 weeks: Feed 4 meals a day
- 12-20 weeks: Feed 3 meals a day
- 20 weeks+: Feed 2 meals a day.



This is a rough guide, so please follow the food packet to weigh out your kitten's food for its weight.

Once your kitten is weaned, they do not need milk. Cats can struggle to digest the lactose in milk, and it can cause diarrhoea. Water is all your cat needs to drink; this should be provided fresh and always be available.

Tips on how to create a cat friendly home

- Provide your cat with plenty of vertical spaces either in the form of a cat tree or existing furniture that your cat can access
- Cardboard boxes or beds with raised sides make great safe places for your cat to hide
- Try to keep to a regular routine as best as you can
- Provide plenty of toys for your cat, allowing them to mimic their natural hunting behaviours
- Scratching posts should be tall enough to allow your cat to fully stretch out
- Ensure that all resources (food bowl, bed, litter tray etc) are kept apart. Cats prefer these separated to prevent contamination
- Avoid using strong air fresheners in your home as cats have a strong sense of smell. When washing your cats bedding, keep one item with their scent on to provide them with a sense of security

For more information, please search <https://icatcare.org>



Litter training

Cats are very private, so the litter box should be in a quiet space to offer them some privacy. The location of the tray is best placed in a secluded corner of the room, this must be away from their bed, food and water bowls. When it comes to litter training, most cats are quick to learn. The location of the litter tray is crucial, and you should show your kitten the litter box as soon as you bring her/him home.

Cats like their litter trays to be clean and tidy, so change soiled litter frequently to prevent them soiling elsewhere in the house. Pregnant women must take precautions when cleaning a soiled litter tray to avoid the small chance of toxoplasmosis infection. It is advised to wear gloves or get someone else to clean it.

Grooming

It is important to gently groom your kitten regularly, so they get used to the feeling of being brushed. Each cat breed has unique grooming needs and as an owner there are times when you need to step in and help. Groom your kitten for short periods while offering small treats so they form a positive association with grooming. This is much less stressful if they have been used to grooming at a young age and useful to check your cat for any lumps or injuries on the body.

Introducing your kitten to a new cat

- Introduce them through a carrier initially
- Create safe hiding places where both the kitten and adult cat can go to if they feel overwhelmed
- Provide separate bowls and litter trays in a variety of different places
- Swap bedding, blankets or toys between the two cats
- Use pheromones to calm the cat
- Keep to a schedule to minimise stress. Cats like routine!
- Keep the litter boxes clean. They are clean animals and can become stressed or agitated if their litter box is dirty.
- Maintain a balanced distribution of love and attention between them both

Socialising

Socialisation should start as early as possible, to avoid any unwanted behaviours and help them develop into a confident adult cat. The experiences your kitten has when they're young play a huge part in the way they behave when they've grown up. Your kitten will learn most of its social behaviours in the first three months. Around this time, it is important to introduce your kitten to new experiences. There are a few key things that your kitten should be gradually exposed to:

- Different people (at least four; ideally a male, female and child)
- Different sounds (vacuum cleaner, fireworks, thunder). There are soundtracks online with household sounds for kittens
- Litter trays and types of litter
- Toys
- Handling (looking in their ears, handling their paws etc, checking their teeth)

Kittens and adult cats need plenty of secure places to hide when they are frightened from a new experience. These should be in different locations and slightly above ground level as cats like to view things from a height.

Dental Care

Cats have two sets of teeth in their lifetime, adult and baby. The deciduous (baby) teeth fall out around 4-6 months. The teething process usually begins around 11-12 weeks of age. During this time your kitten may experience drooling and difficulty eating.

To help a teething kitten, provide soft food like wet food or soaked kibble, offer safe chew toys and distract them with interactive play time. If you start brushing your kitten's teeth at an early age, they may be more acceptive to it when they are older. Make sure you use a toothbrush and toothpaste approved for cats.

We run dental clinics at our hospital and branches, if you would like to know more, please ask our Client Care team or speak to one of the nursing team.

Playing with your kitten

Playing with your kitten is important for their physical and mental well-being, helps them with their social skills and strengthens their bond with you. Some toys such as puzzle feeders are designed to be filled with cat food and provide amusement and exercise. Rolled up balls of paper, ping-pong balls and cardboard boxes also provide entertainment for your kitten. Laser pens may look fun, but are not recommended for kittens and cats as they become very frustrated at not being able to catch something physical.

Neutering

It is possible for female cats to have a litter of kittens from as early as 4 months of age. We recommend getting your cat spayed to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to significantly decrease the risk of mammary, ovarian, and uterine cancers, as well as uterine infections. We recommend neutering your female kitten from around 4-6 months of age.

Castrating male cats will stop various unwanted behaviours such as 'spraying' and will also help them reduce aggression towards other cats. Unneutered male cats are more likely to roam long distances in search of mates and to establish or defend their territories. This results in a large percentage of entire male cats being involved in road traffic accidents. We recommend neutering your male kitten from around 4-6 months of age.

Identification

Microchipping cats is a legal requirement in England for cats over 20 weeks of age. This is a simple procedure where a tiny chip, about the size of a grain of rice, is inserted under the skin, usually between the shoulder blades. This contains a code that links to the owner's contact details on a database. Collars can be useful in identifying your cat and allowing them access to cat flaps. However, collars can be easily lost. If using a collar, they should fit with room for two fingers to be inserted around the neck. We recommend using the quick release buckle collars rather than the elastic as these can cause injuries.

Insurance

Pet insurance helps cover the cost of veterinary treatment. There is no NHS available for animals, so we strongly recommend taking out pet insurance. There are a lot of different companies that offer a wide range of policies, so please read the small print carefully and take notice of the terms and conditions.

We strongly advise that you choose a Lifetime or 'Covered for Life' policy. This means that your pet will be covered for its entire life providing that you renew your policy each year without any break in cover.

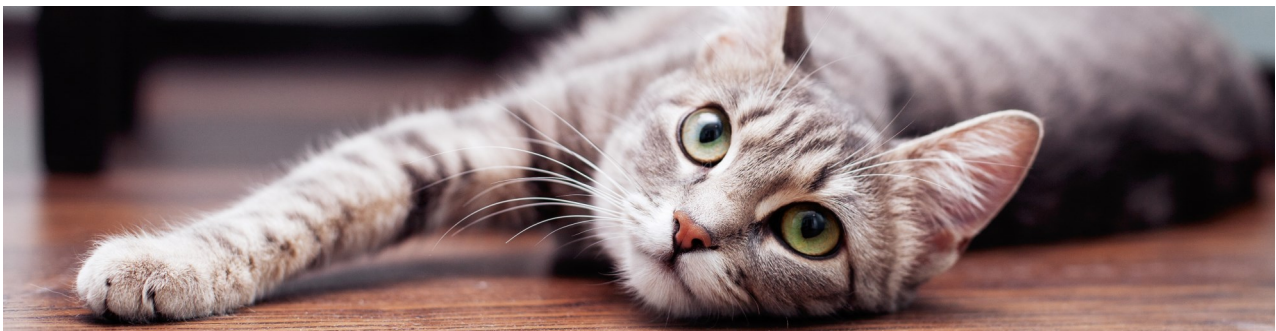
Common poisons

Many common household items are poisonous to cats. It is important to be aware of these so you can prevent your cat from ingesting them:

- Mice & rat poison
- Lillies
- Paracetamol
- Garlic/onions
- Slug pellets
- Spot on flea treatment for dogs that contain permethrin
- Anti-freeze
- Decorating materials (glass cleaners, varnishes, creosote, white spirit)

**Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns on
01666 823165**

You can also join in the fun on Facebook at



www.facebook.com/georgevetshospital

We look forward to watching your kitten grow into a happy and healthy cat