

**Your Guide To**

# **Kitten Health Care**



**Humanimals**  
YOUR PETS' DOCTOR

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# Kitten Health Care Information



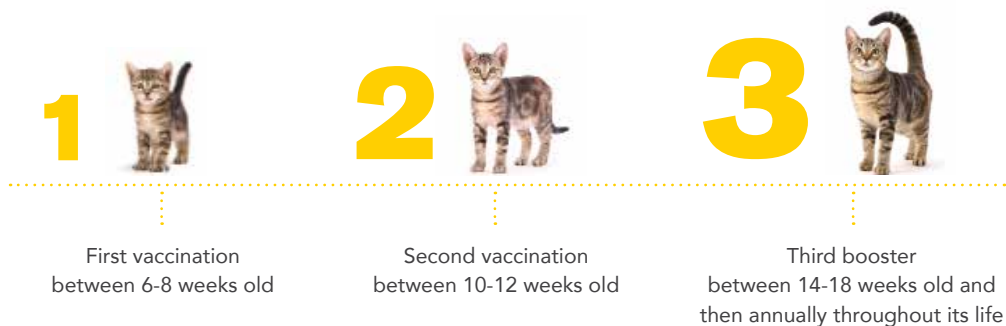
Bringing a new kitten into your family is exciting. To get your bundle of fur off to the best start in life, there are a few things to think about from a health perspective.

## Vaccinations

Vaccinations are the best way to protect your kitten from several dangerous diseases. We recommend that you vaccinate your cat or kitten against the feline panleukopenia virus, as well as feline herpesvirus 1 and feline calicivirus.

An animal not vaccinated is susceptible to highly contagious diseases; some outcomes can be fatal. Therefore, it is essential that you follow the vaccination schedule, to protect your pet and others around them.

## Kitten Vaccination Schedule:



We recommend administering the final kitten vaccination no earlier than 16 weeks of age. If your kitten begins its vaccination schedule before it is 8 weeks old, we may recommend an additional fourth vaccine to meet this requirement. Currently, adult cats receive annual vaccination against feline herpesvirus and calicivirus and a three-yearly vaccination against panleukopenia. However, if your veterinarian deems your cat to be at low-risk, you may elect to vaccinate against all three diseases once every three years. This schedule may vary depending on your veterinary recommendation.

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Although not included in routine vaccinations, we can vaccinate against feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia (FeLV) also. Cats that go outside are at higher risk for exposure to FIV and FeLV compared with cats that stay indoors. If your cat's exposure risk is low, your veterinarian may not suggest these vaccines, so make sure you ask this important question.

## Intestinal Worming

Intestinal parasite infestations can cause your kitten to become unwell or even die. You must de-worm your kitten regularly, every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age, then one a month until 6 months of age, and every 3-6 months for life.

There are a variety of de-worming products available, including:

- All-wormer tablets and paste
- Partial-wormer topical liquids which are safe from 8 weeks of age
- Partial-wormer & flea control topical drops which are safe from 8 weeks of age

We recommend all-wormers for kittens up to 6 months of age, and partial worming is sufficient for most adult cats. However, if your cat spends time outside, we recommend administering an all-wormer every 6-12 months.



## Microchipping

Microchipping your kitten before sale or at a change of ownership is encouraged by vets. This tiny chip is placed under the skin of the neck, between your kitten's shoulder blades. If your kitten is found and taken to a vet or animal shelter, staff will use a special scanner to retrieve the unique identifying code on your kitten's microchip.

When entered into the National NZCAR (New Zealand Companion Animal Register) database, this code will bring up a file that contains all of your contact information, so your kitten can be reunited with you. It's crucial that you keep these details up to date. If you're unsure of your kitten's microchip status, we can use our clinic scanner to check this - it only takes a few minutes and does not require an appointment.

If you move or change phone numbers, don't forget to update your records with your local council as well as the microchip database.



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## Fleas

Fleas are one of the most problematic parasites in the world, with the ability to cause skin disease and allergic reactions. They can be difficult to diagnose - a cat or kitten with flea allergy dermatitis may never actually be seen with fleas!

Flea treatments must be used every month of the year to effectively prevent and control flea infestations. Please check the label carefully when you buy a new flea treatment or prevention product. Some products are safe for dogs but are toxic to cats. If in doubt, please consult with one of our staff who will be happy to advise you. All pets in the household should be treated.

## Desexing

Desexed pets are less likely to urinate inappropriately, fight, wander, develop behavioural problems and produce unwanted litters. They are also less susceptible to certain cancers, and infections such as pyometra. Research shows that desexed pets are more likely to live longer.

Generally speaking, we advise desexing your cat by six months of age. However, it is best to ask your veterinarian's recommendation as this may vary depending on the pet.

On the day of surgery, your cat will come into the hospital in the morning (without breakfast), have their procedure under a general anesthetic, and go home the same day or the following day, depending on their condition.



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## Feeding

There are many premium-grade commercial foods that meet the exact nutritional requirements of growing kittens. Although brands vary in quality, premium brands generally provide higher quality ingredients.

You should feed them a “kitten” or “growth” variety until your cat is 12 months old. At 8 weeks of age, you should provide your kitten with 3 small meals per deal. From 4-5 months of age, you can reduce this to 2 larger meals per day. Feeding guidelines can be found on the label of your chosen food. Any change in your kitten’s diet must be made gradually over 3-5 days to prevent gastrointestinal issues.

It is vital to your cat’s long-term health that it is kept in lean, muscular body condition. Please ask our vets to learn more about the healthy body condition for your cat.

## Behaviour and Training

Part of your kitten’s charm is its independence, stubbornness, and free spirit. This free spirit also means your kitten will be less responsive to training than a puppy.

However, cats and kittens can still be trained. You might teach your kitten to use a litter trav. stav off the kitchen counters, or even not to use your couch as a scratching post.

It’s important to remember that your cat isn’t misbehaving on purpose - it’s just displaying normal, natural behaviours, and it doesn’t know that these are undesirable to humans.

You should provide your kitten with lots of toys and environmental enrichment throughout its life to keep it occupied, and to curb bad behaviour.

Please note: some information may vary between cats. If you are unsure, please consult your veterinarian.



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## Toilet Training

Most kittens are very easy to toilet train, and some even train themselves. Initially, you should use the same litter as your cat's breeder or pet shop used, and gradually introduce your preferred litter by mixing it into its tray.

You should provide at least one tray per cat in your household, plus one extra. Trays should be kept away from feeding and sleeping areas or high traffic areas like hallways, and cleaned once or twice daily. An unclean or inappropriately positioned tray will cause your kitten to urinate and defecate in other areas of your house.

## Boarding

It's important to consider your kitten's safety and comfort while you're away on holiday.

You may choose to:

- Have a friend or family member care for your cat in their home or yours.
- Hire a pet sitter to care for your cat in your home.
- Board your cat with a cattery.



## Pet Insurance

Veterinary care nowadays is cutting-edge, and there are many options available if your cat becomes seriously ill or injured. However, unlike the human healthcare system, there is no government funding available to pay for veterinary treatment. Pet insurance can help to alleviate the cost of vet bills. Most pet insurance companies offer a range of policies that may suit your needs, from life-long insurance to illness and accidental injury. Shop around to find out what's out there.



**To make an appointment, book online at [www.humanimals.co.nz](http://www.humanimals.co.nz)  
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