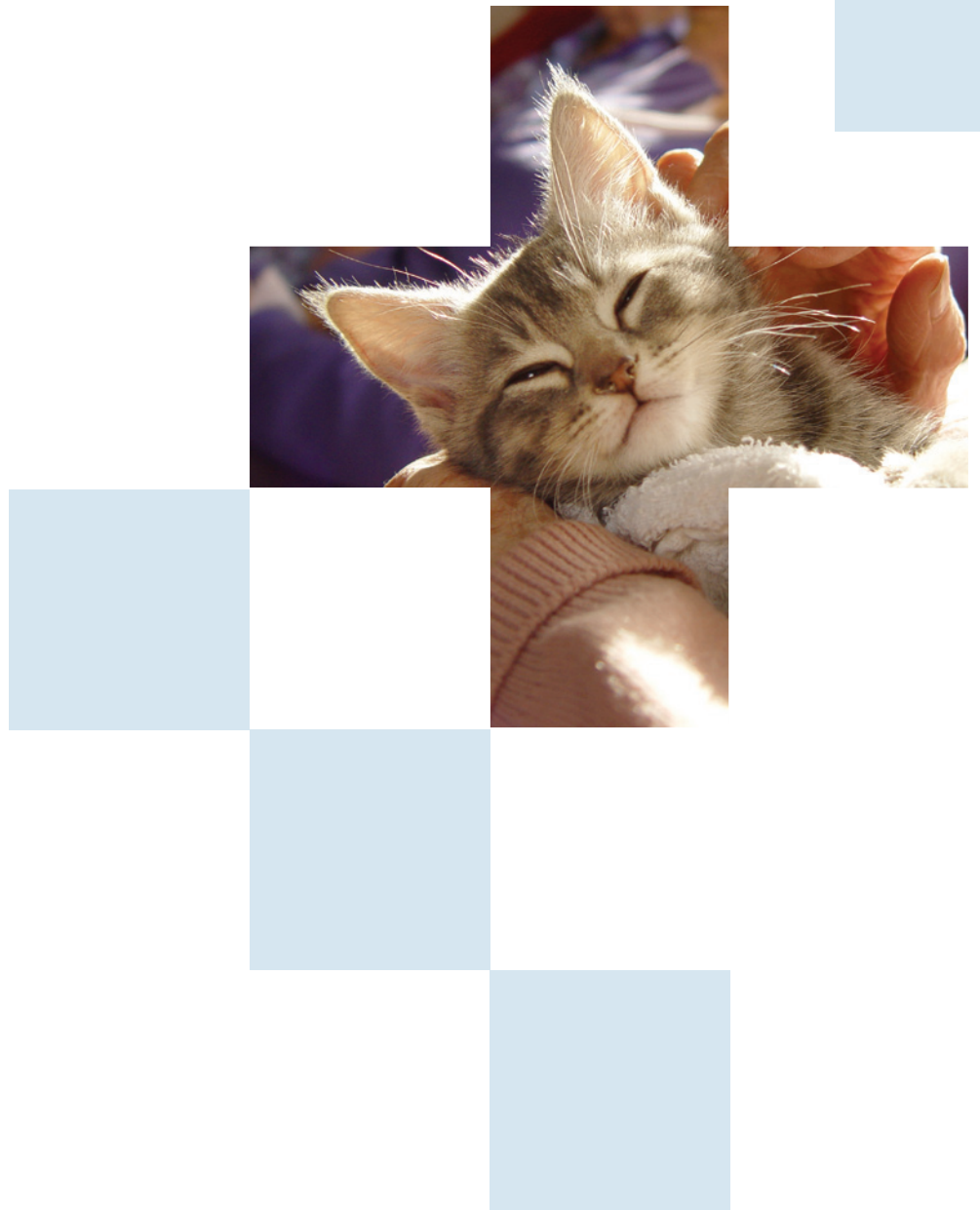


General Practice Service
Willows Information Sheets

Looking after your kitten





Looking after your kitten

Congratulations on acquiring your new kitten. We are sure that by now you will have fallen in love with your new family member! Please read on for simple guidelines regarding the care of your new pet.

Things your kitten needs

- a food and water bowl
- at least one litter tray
- a scratching post
- toys
- a sturdy carrying basket
- pet health insurance – kittens can be accident prone!

What to do next

- Provide a soft warm bed. Moving to a new home and away from its mother and litter mates is a stressful situation for your kitten, no matter how much you may welcome your new addition to the family. This means that your kitten needs a private place to retreat to when it is tired or a bit scared. A bed in a cat igloo or even a strong cardboard box with a hole cut into the side is ideal. Make sure no-one disturbs the kitten when it is in the bed
- Explain to children to be gentle with their new pet and not to scare him or her. Excited children can easily injure a kitten unintentionally and a frightened kitten can use sharp teeth and claws to defend itself!
- Introduce other pets gradually and make sure they cannot harm your kitten.

Feeding

For the first few days after taking your kitten home it is advisable to feed the same food it has been used to. After your kitten has settled in, you can change the diet if you wish to. Cats have very special nutritional needs, which are very difficult to meet by making up diets at home. When choosing a food, make sure you get a good quality complete food which will contain everything your kitten needs.

Small kittens (8 to 12 weeks old) need four meals per day, this can gradually be reduced to two meals by the time they are six months old. (See [Nutrition advice for cats information sheet](#)).

Using a litter tray

Most kittens do not need toilet training and will use a litter tray straightaway. Cats are quite fussy with their toilet habits, so please put trays in a quiet place and keep them meticulously clean. Do not place the litter tray near food and water bowls – no-one likes to eat right next to the toilet!

The trays need to be cleaned frequently – many cats will not use a tray that is dirty.

General care

Get your kitten used to having its ears, mouth and feet handled while enjoying a cuddle on the sofa. If you have chosen a long-haired cat breed, make sure it gets used to daily grooming to prevent matting of the coat. This will help to establish a strong bond with your kitten and will make it much easier later when ears, mouth and feet have to be cleaned or checked. This is also a good time to gently introduce teeth cleaning. (See [Dental care for dogs and cats information sheet](#)).

Vaccination

You should have your kitten vaccinated against 'cat flu', panleucopaenia ('enteritis') and usually also leukaemia. To ensure full protection, kittens need to be vaccinated twice within two to four weeks. The protection will start about seven to ten days after the second vaccination. Leukaemia vaccination is advisable for kittens that will go outside later or have contact to outdoor cats. As kittens can occasionally catch this virus from their mothers, if required we can do a blood test prior to vaccination to be certain that your kitten is not infected already. (See [Vaccination in cats information sheet](#)).

Microchipping (identichipping)

Your kitten can be microchipped at the time of vaccination. A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice and contains a unique bar code

number which can be read using a small scanner. The microchip number, together with the details of the owner and cat are then registered on a national database. Should your cat ever become lost and is found, the chip number can easily be read by using the scanner and your cat can be re-united with you.

Worming

No matter how diligent the breeder or previous carer has been, your kitten will have picked up a few worms. Regular worming should be performed every two to three weeks until three months of age, and then monthly until six months of age. Afterwards, regular worming at least every three months is advisable to protect both your cat and your family, especially if your cat goes outside. Effective safe veterinary worming tablets and spot-on products are available from reception, providing your dog has been seen by one of our vets within a reasonable period – this is a legal requirement for prescription medications. (See [Worming your cat information sheet](#)).

Fleas, mites and ticks

Fleas and ear mites are common parasites in both kittens and adult cats. Both can cause severe irritation and skin or ear infections. Fleas can also transmit tape worms. Spot-on products can be used to treat or prevent fleas and ticks. Please ask us for guidance. (See [Ectoparasites \(fleas and other parasites\) in cats information sheet](#)).

Free health checks

As part of our vaccination package we offer a free health check when your kitten is six months old. Apart from your kitten having a thorough examination this is also a good time to discuss neutering, feeding, preventative health issues and any other questions you may have.

Neutering

There are many unwanted cats and kittens in rescue shelters or fending for themselves. Neutering your cat ensures that you do not contribute to this problem. Please only let your cat have kittens if you already know that they will all go to loving homes. We castrate and spay cats from five to six months of age. (See [Neutering in cats information sheet](#)).

Should your kitten be unwell or should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

General Practice Service
www.willows.uk.net



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