

Cat Care



Cats are a more solitary pet but still require time, care and money to ensure that their needs are met, both from a health and environmental perspective. If you plan to have a multi-cat household, you will need to ensure that all cats have enough resources, such as litter trays, food bowls, resting places etc, to make them feel safe and secure. Stress is a big problem in cats and can cause both physical health issues and behavioural issues, such as urinary tract infections or spraying. Consideration should be given to re-homing a cat as there are always lots of cats looking for a new, forever home.

Diet

It is important for development to feed a kitten diet first 6 months. Regular weight checks is a good way to your kitten is receiving the nutrition it requires during important growth period.

For an older cat, a good quality balanced diet should that they receive all the nutrients they require for health. However, cats can develop issues with their kidneys later in life so consideration should be given to switching to a specific diet that can help with this or a senior diet once they reach 7 years old.



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After neutering, your cat's appetite is likely to increase whilst his or her daily requirement for food will decrease. Many pet cats are therefore overweight and more susceptible to disease. This can be prevented by feeding a specific diet for neutered cats which still provides all their nutritional needs whilst maintaining a healthy weight.

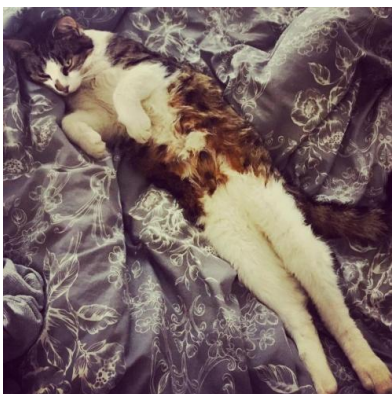
Your cat will require free and immediate access to food and water in separate locations from one another and in a private place as cats are solitary animals.

Preventative Health Care

Vaccinations - An initial course of 2 injections is given 3 weeks apart with the first being given from 8 weeks of age and the second from 11 weeks. Your kitten is free to go out two weeks after the 2nd injection. It is important to boost this vaccination annually to maintain protection against diseases such as cat flu and leukaemia.

Flea prevention - All cats are liable to catch fleas if they are not treated regularly. With central heating creating an ideal environment for fleas, treatment is required all year round.

Worm control - Kittens need to be wormed every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age, then monthly until 6 months old and then every 3 months for life. Worms can be dangerous to pets. They also pose a risk to humans, particularly children; some may even cause blindness. You do not need to see adult worms for your pet to be infected as most animals only shed the eggs in their faeces.



Insurance - We STRONGLY advise pet owners to take out pet healthcare insurance. Owning a cat can be expensive, but unexpected treatment costs can be very unwelcome and sometimes, sadly, unaffordable. With good pet insurance you can rest assured your furry friend is covered for all eventualities.

Microchip - Although it isn't the law, it is advisable to have your kitten/cat micro-chipped to make it easier to reunite your pet if they happen to get lost or are involved in traffic accident. Cats are more likely to wander further from home as it is their nature to do so.

Dental Care - Although it might be difficult, it is ideal to get your kitten used to having their mouth examined on a regular basis. This can be much more difficult with an adult cat but there are other ways in which you can reduce the risk of dental disease. Feeding a dry diet is better for dental health than a wet food and offering dental specific treats can also help to reduce the build up of tartar on your cat's teeth.

Regular dental health checks with your vet is a great way to monitor teeth and gum health and with a regular scale and polish, maintaining good oral health and hygiene will reduce the risk of expensive and intensive dental treatment and possible extractions later in life.

Ensure any dental treats are factored into your cat's daily food allowance to avoid weight gain.

Neutering - In the UK it is routine to neuter unless you plan to breed from your cat. Neutering prevents unwanted territorial and mating behaviour as well as unwanted pregnancies. For queens (females) the procedure is a spay and for toms (males) it is a castration. Your cat can be neutered from 12 weeks of age. However, this is determined on an individual basis so it is always best to seek your vets advise on the best time.



Behaviour

Allow your kitten or cat to 'hunt' by providing various toys. If he or she won't play then try a different toy. You can hide food or catnip in toys to enable your kitten/cat to 'catch' something at the end of the hunt. Cats should be able to stretch to full length to scratch and stretch the back muscles, remove old nail sheaths and to mark boundaries so providing a scratching post or alternative is important.

Many of the behavioural problems adult cats present with are associated with unwanted expressions of normal feline behaviour. By being aware of natural feline behaviour and modifying the environment accordingly we are able to minimise stress and the risk of behavioural problems (and disease) developing.



It is necessary to provide more than one private resting place and ensure that there are safe entry and exit points within the territory. Litter trays should be in a private place and at the perimeter of a room. In multi-cat households it is necessary to have at least one litter tray per cat plus a spare. Access to 3-D space is also beneficial (e.g. wardrobes, cat furniture, shelves etc) as are places to hide such as cardboard boxes.

Socialization

Kittens are most sensitive to socialisation between 2 and 7 weeks old so it is important to begin socialising your kitten as soon as he or she gets home. Gently lift, restrain and examine your kitten little and often and expose him or her to several people of different ages. Allow your kitten to explore independently to build confidence.

The use of Feliway plug-ins or sprays for the first month your cat/kitten is in his or her new home can really help to settle them. It is also useful to use the spray in the car and the cat basket, which should always be left out with the lid off and bedding inside, as well as the odd treat!

Equipment

Your cat will require several items of equipment some of which is necessary, others which are more desirable depending on your own preferences :

- Food and water bowl.
- Scratching post.
- Bedding.
- Toys.
- Secure cat basket/box.