



A STEP AHEAD FOR THEIR BEST LIFE

Our guide to your
cat's first year





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Name

Date of birth

Our tips will help you take care of your cat throughout their life.



Visiting your vet

Just like you, your cat needs vaccinations and regular check-ups to maintain optimal health. Together, you and your vet can provide your pet with the best care for a long, healthy life. Your vet healthcare team is the best source of information for your pet's health, so it's important to follow their recommendations for the well-being of your cat.

Your cat's vaccinations

Vaccinations play a critical role in your pet's health throughout their life by providing protection against infectious diseases. Your vet will start your cat on a vaccination course and advise you when boosters are necessary.

Most vets recommend a combined vaccination at 8 and 12 weeks of age, with a yearly booster at your pet's annual health check. Timing may vary, depending on the vaccine your vet chooses and your cat's lifestyle.

The clinically proven unique blend in **Hill's Vet Essentials Kitten** is proven to support your kitten's immunity and even to improve your kitten's response to their vaccinations!

For more advice please visit:

www.icatcare.org/advice/vaccinating-your-cat



Health & vaccination record



Help your cat get the right care for a long, happy life. Record their health information below and keep it with any other records you have for your cat.

Veterinarian	
Phone	
Microchip no.	
Insured with	

The first year

In your cat's first year, worm them and check their weight every month until 6 months, then every 3 months or as recommended by your vet. Ask the nurse to show you how to weigh your cat at home, or if you don't have any scales, then the practice team can weigh your cat for you. The correct weight is important to ensure the correct worming dose.

Make sure your vet or vet nurse completes the chart at each visit.

	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Weight						
Worming						

Veterinary visits

After the first year, visit your vet every 6 months or as recommended by your vet healthcare team. One of the most important things you can do for your kitten's health and wellbeing- now and for the future - is to maintain a healthy weight. Around half of all domestic cats in the UK are overweight. This can have a significant impact on your pet's quality and longevity of life.



Feeding your kitten

The first few months are vital for your kitten's lifelong health. Choosing a food that will provide your pet with a complete source of nutrition is of great importance. Feeding a food not formulated for kittens is not recommended.

How much should you feed your kitten?

The amount of food you should feed your kitten will change during their first year of life based on your pet's weight and shape. Your veterinary healthcare team can help you understand how to adjust your kitten's food intake to ensure the development of a healthy kitten.

Measure out the amount of food required for your kitten at the start of the day and feed the kitten small amounts throughout the day. Kittens prefer to eat little and often. Most importantly, once the day's ration has gone, don't be tempted to give your kitten more.

It's important for your kitten's future health that they grow in a controlled, gradual way. Use this chart to keep a record of your kitten's growth and weight at every vet visit.



ASK YOUR VET

Although we appreciate bringing your cat to the vet can be challenging, we would recommend that your kitten visits the practice to be weighed every month for the first 6 months of its life. Knowing your kitten's weight allows for more accurate calculation of worming dosages, as well as monitoring growth.

Did you know that Hill's also make a wet food?

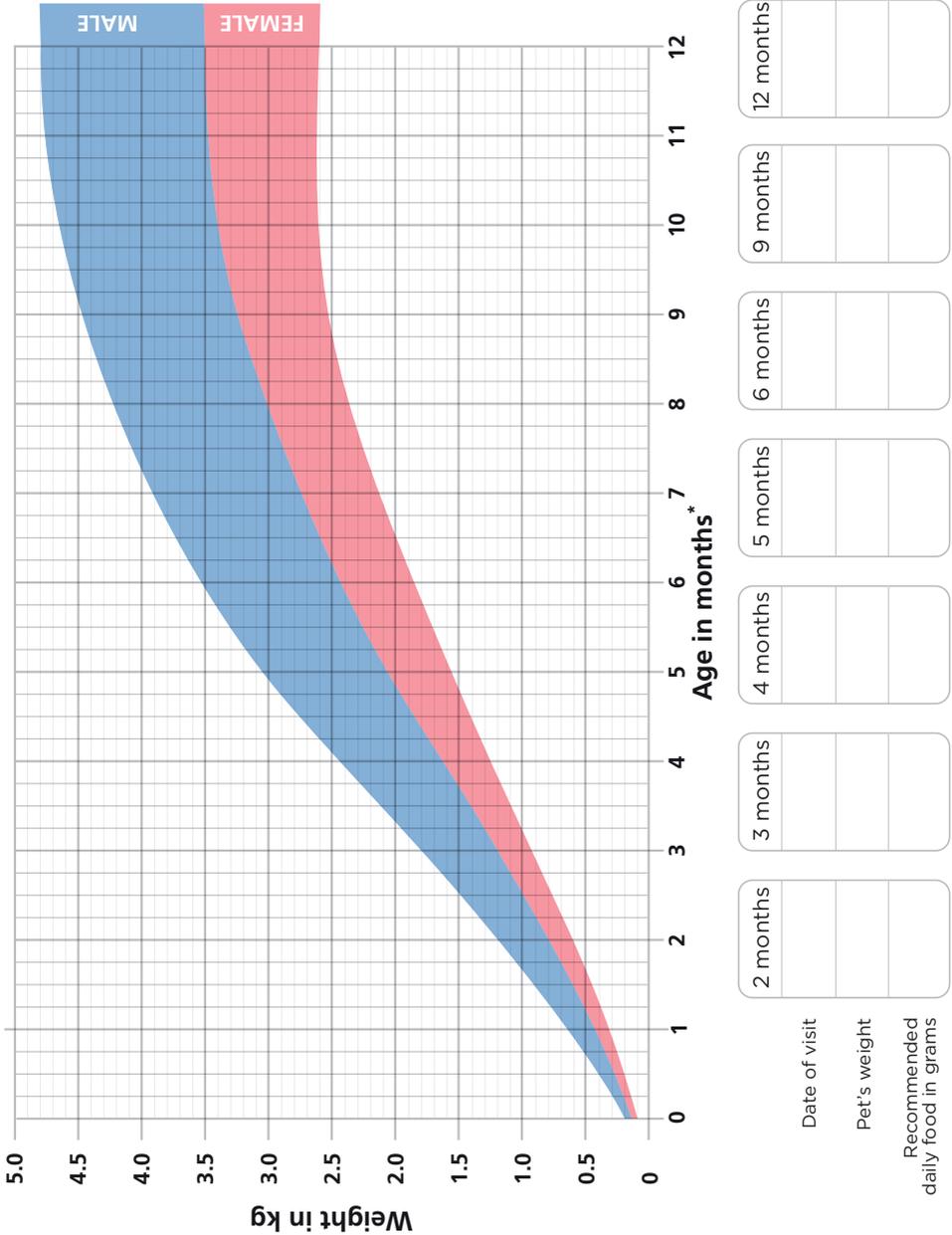
Hill's Science Plan Kitten wet foods have all the benefits of Hill's dry diet but in a delicious wet formula for owners who like to feed a mix of wet and dry foods.



Tracking your kitten's growth



Ask your vet or vet nurse to complete the chart at each visit.





Vet Essentials Growth Kitten (3 weeks - 6 months)

This practice recommends Hill's Vet Essentials Kitten food. The clinically proven health benefits in Hill's Vet Essentials Kitten food are formulated to address your kitten's essential health needs, such as proven levels of natural DHA to help support visual and brain development and a balance of minerals and Omega-3s to help growing bones and joints.



Powerful antioxidants (vitamin C+E) to support a developing immune system. Clinically proven to improve vaccination response.



With DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid to help nourish brain and eye development. Contains the correct balance of minerals to help support bone and tooth development.



Helps support a healthy urinary system.



Designed to provide healthy digestion.



With Omega-6s fatty acids for healthy skin and luxurious coat.



A growing kitten needs precise levels of essential nutrients to stay healthy. To meet their growth and development requirements, the food should have more energy, protein and calcium than food for adult cats.

How to introduce new food

It is important that you transition your cat to a new food gradually to avoid upsetting their digestion. Introduce new food over a 7-day period. You can either mix the new food with your cats current food or you can feed them in separate bowls, gradually increasing the amount until you're feeding only the new food. It's actually quite common for cats to reject a new food, so don't be surprised if your cat won't eat the new food straight away. Although most cats will transition within a week, it can sometimes take longer. Always refer to the feeding guide on the pack.

Introducing new food can be challenging, but we are confident your cat will love the great taste of Hill's Vet Essentials. In fact, we offer a **100% satisfaction guarantee**. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return the product for a complete refund.



Switching to a Hill's Vet Essentials adult cat food

When your kitten becomes a young adult at 6 months of age, transition them to an adult cat food to ensure they receive the proper nutrient levels.

Your kitten has done the majority of its growing by the time they are 6 months of age, although they will continue to gain some bodyweight for a few more months. There are some rare exceptions for very large breeds of cat that will continue to grow until 12-18 months of age, such as Maine Coons.

tips

Exercise

Regular exercise is essential to keep your cat fit and healthy. Plus, it keeps their mind active and happy, too.

- Try using a wand toy little and often but be sure to put the toy away afterwards. String based toys can be dangerous to your kitten if left unsupervised.
- Hiding food or using puzzle feeders.
- Leave toys out for your kitten, such as ping pong balls, little toy mice and scrunched up paper - you may even be able to teach your cat to fetch!



Weight management

Weight gain is the result of an increase in body fat usually caused by eating too much, especially when combined with lack of exercise. The most common cause of unwanted weight gain is feeding too much and the giving of treats. If you want to give your cat 'treats' we recommend taking a few biscuits from the daily ration. As body fat increases so does the risk for:

- Reduced mobility and arthritis
- Increased physical injury
- Respiratory disease
- Diabetes
- Shortened life expectancy
- Urinary Tract Disease
- Skin Disease

Overweight kittens are more likely to become overweight adults. Keeping your cat at a healthy weight throughout its life will increase their life expectancy and quality of life. Combining a change in nutrition with increased exercise is the most effective way of achieving a healthy weight. Weight gain is gradual and many owners won't notice it. That is why it is important to actually weigh your pet as well as giving them a thorough examination of their body shape. We call this 'Body Condition Scoring' or BCS. Body condition scoring is something usually done by your practice health care team, but they can show you how to monitor your pet's shape as well. Please see pages 10 and 11.

Visiting your veterinary practice regularly for help with things like weighing means that your kitten can have lots of 'positive' experiences and this can mean much happier to visit the vet in the future.

As well as weighing your cat, your vet or nurse will also carry out a 'body condition score' (BCS) to assess how much body fat your pet is carrying.

Ribs prominent and easily felt with no fat cover.

Bones are raised with minimal tissue between skin and the bone.

Ribs visible and easily felt.

Body Condition Score

1

VERY THIN

Body Condition Score

2

UNDERWEIGHT

Body Condition Score

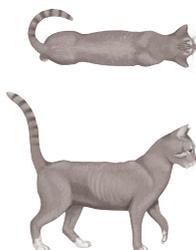
3

IDEAL WEIGHT



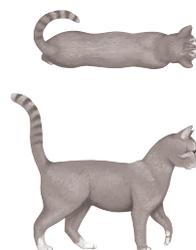
Your cat is UNDERWEIGHT.

Please check with your vet to see if there is anything to be concerned about.



Your cat is UNDERWEIGHT.

Please check with your vet to see if there is anything to be concerned about.



Your cat is IDEAL WEIGHT.

Congratulations!

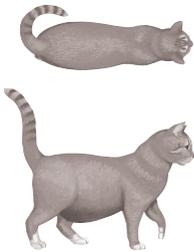
Difficult to see or feel the ribs. Slightly sagging abdominal fat pad.

Ribs not visible and difficult to feel. Has a prominent sagging abdominal fat pad.

Body Condition Score

4

OVERWEIGHT



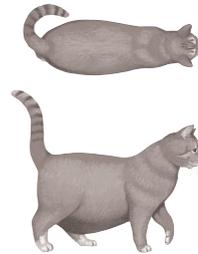
Your cat is OVERWEIGHT.

Please consult your vet or vet nurse for further advice.

Body Condition Score

5

OBESSE



Your cat is OVERWEIGHT

And is at a higher risk of developing a weight related health condition. Please consult your vet or vet nurse for further advice.

They'll be looking out for a narrowing at your pets waist, how much fat covers their ribs etc. If your pet has a BCS of above 3, it may be recommended that your pet goes onto a weight reduction diet, although such diets are not suitable until your cat is fully grown.

Unless you intend to breed from your kitten, your vet will probably recommend getting your pet neutered (sterilised). You may also hear the terms spaying - to neuter a female, and castration, to neuter a male. There are numerous proven health benefits to neutering your cat, however, your cat will have an increased tendency to gain body fat following neutering and so you should change the diet appropriately to accommodate this.

Regardless of neutering, you should normally feed your pet kitten food until 6 months of age- to ensure healthy skeletal growth. From 6 months of age we usually recommend a move to an adult or neutered adult product. Your veterinary healthcare team can help advise you on the best diet to choose. They may also recommend regular weight checks to ensure your cat is not gaining weight following neutering.



Vet Essentials Neutered Cat

Available in Young Adult (6 months - 6 years) and Mature Adult (7+ years)

Formulated with precisely targeted levels of fat, lysine and L-carnitine to help keep your cat fit and full of vitality. Plus controlled mineral levels for a healthy urinary system.



Unique blend of ingredients clinically proven to support fat burning and help cats achieve & maintain optimal weight. Helps maintain optimal body weight for sterilised cats with clinically proven levels of L-carnitine.



Controlled levels of magnesium, phosphorus and calcium to support a healthy urinary system.



With omega-6 fatty acids for healthy skin and luxurious fur.

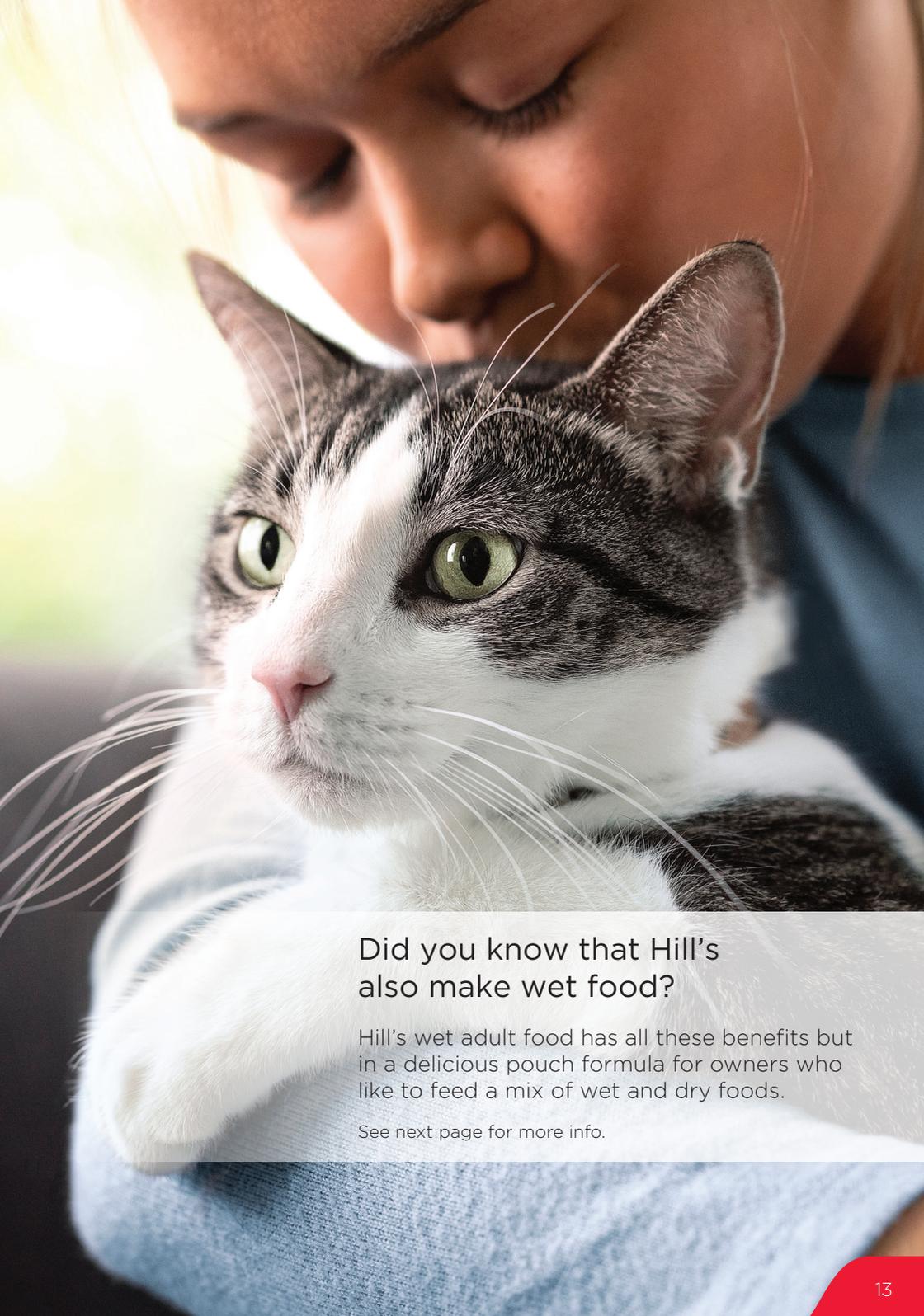


Designed to help maintain a healthy digestive system and firm stools.



High levels of antioxidants to support natural defences. (Young Adult Food).





Did you know that Hill's also make wet food?

Hill's wet adult food has all these benefits but in a delicious pouch formula for owners who like to feed a mix of wet and dry foods.

See next page for more info.



Precise nutrition for each lifestage

Vet Essentials Wet Adult (6 months - 6 years)

Formulated with high-quality protein to support healthy digestion. Gives you a delicious way to bond with your pet.



Supports healthy digestion.



Supports healthy muscles.



Supports healthy vital organs.



Supports healthy skin & coat.



Clinically proven antioxidants for a healthy immune system.



Vet Essentials Dental Health

Available in Adult (1-6 years) and Mature Adult (7+ years)

Formulated with unique, clinically proven technology. The larger kibbles, with mono directional fibre technology, help scrub teeth clean like a toothbrush.



Clinically proven Dental Kibble Technology that reduces plaque and tartar build-up to keep teeth and gums healthy.



With an optimal fibre blend to promote gastrointestinal health.



Helps support a healthy urinary system.



With omega-6 fatty acids for healthy skin and luxurious fur.



Helps maintain optimal bodyweight with clinically proven levels of L-carnitine and high levels of fibre.



Oral care for adult cats

Pay special attention to your cat's teeth. This is the lifestage when plaque becomes an issue and gum problems tend to arise. Poor dental health can even put your cat's overall health at risk:

- Plaque builds up on your cat's teeth.
- Bacteria in the plaque irritates their gums.
- The irritated gums bleed, allowing bacteria from the plaque to enter the bloodstream.
- Bacteria in the bloodstream travel throughout the body, and can negatively impact vital organs.



Vet Essentials Dental Health
Young Adult (real size)



tips

Unique toothbrush-like kibble

Hill's Vet Essentials[®] Adult utilises special technology that provides a cleaning action clinically proven to help reduce plaque and tartar, which can help freshen the breath and reduce the long-term risks of gum disease.



1 Special fibres help the kibble stay in contact with the tooth surface right to the gumline.

2 Larger-sized kibble cleans teeth and helps freshen breath as your pet chews.

3 Kibble gently scrubs away bacteria-laden plaque and tartar to help support good dental health.

* Vet Essentials Dental Health Feline Young Adult and Dental Health Mature Adult dry formulas only.



How old is your cat in human years?

PET'S AGE	HUMAN YEARS*	LIFESTAGE
3 months	9	Kitten (0-6 months)
6 months	13	
1 year	19	Junior (7 - 24 months)
2 years	28	
3 years	30	Adult (3 - 6 years)
4 years	38	
5 years	45	
6 years	48	
7 years	51	Mature (7 - 10 years)
8 years	55	
9 years	59	
10 years	63	
11 years	66	Senior (11 - 14 years)
12 years	69	
13 years	72	
14 years	77	
15 years	81	Super Senior (15 years +)
16 years	86	
17 years	90	
18 years	95	

*All ages approximate. These guidelines follows those set out by the International Society of Feline Medicine.



The first year

During this first year, your kitten will be learning new things every day and needs the right nutrition to help keep their energy up.

Feeding tips

- Follow the feeding guidelines on your kitten's food packaging.
- Feed your kitten little and often.
- Avoid feeding table scraps to your kitten - this can lead to weight issues and create a finicky eater.
- Don't feed your kitten milk - it's not necessary and can cause diarrhoea.
- Did you know there are numerous factors that effect your cat's willingness to eat a food - not just the flavour. At Hill's we consider the many preferences of cats when we create our foods to be sure that they meet everything your cat would want. Factors such as aroma, texture and even shape have a role to play in how acceptable and palatable a food is. That's why we offer our **100% money back guarantee**, because we're so confident your cat will enjoy our food, we will give you your money back if they won't!



Microchipping your pet is one way to increase the odds of being reunited with your cat should it become lost. Microchipping pets involves placing a small computer chip about the size of a grain of rice under the skin. It is implanted in a simple procedure by your vet or vet nurse, who uses a needle to place the microchip under the loose skin in between the shoulder blades.

The Procedure

This whole procedure takes just a few minutes and is as simple as any injection given by your vet or nurse. However, your practice may recommend microchipping at a time when your pet is being given a general anaesthetic, such as at neutering time.



Is your cat trying to tell you something? By learning how to interpret body language, you can interpret their intentions.



Meows

- Cats meow for lots of reasons such as wanting attention, wanting to go outdoors or come back inside or when they are hungry, so don't think that every meow is a hungry meow! You can learn the difference in your own cat, as each cat tends to have its own set of meows.



Rolling over

When cats roll in a relaxed roll, exposing the belly - this is not an invitation to touch or stroke but simply a greeting and a sign they trust you. However, cats can sometimes also roll over if they are being defensive or in extreme fear.



Tail

Speed of tail movement usually increases as the cat's attention or agitation increases. A cat's tail may swish backwards and forwards but this has a different meaning to a dog wagging its tail. A tucked under tail is definitely the sign of an unhappy cat and may be a sign of fear, anxiety or pain.

Purring

Cats purr for three different reasons:

- When they are content and relaxed.
- When they want something from us, such as food or attention.
- Sometimes when they are unwell or very distressed or in pain.

Upon arrival, show your kitten where the litter tray is located. Avoid over emphasising litter tray locations, or placing your kitten in the tray after meals, as too much attention like this can make some cats wary of the tray, or even of you! Once kittens know where the tray is, they generally don't need reminding. Having them nearby is more important when they are small.

tips

DO

- Put litter trays in quiet, calm locations that are easy for your cat to reach, away from noisy household appliances.
- Place your cat's litter tray away from their bed in a spot that's reasonably private.
- Litter trays need to be scooped daily and fully cleaned every week. Clean with hot water and diluted washing powder/liquid. If you use a disinfectant use one which is not toxic to cats, dilute as recommended by the manufacturer, then rinse well before refilling with clean litter.

DON'T

- Don't clean the litter tray if you are immunosuppressed or pregnant. Get someone else to help or wear rubber gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Don't keep the litter tray near the food or water bowls.

Accidents

Remember, accidents happen, so try to be understanding and don't punish your pet.

Making adjustments

Ideally, have at least 1 tray per cat plus 1 extra. So if you have 2 cats, have 3 litter trays. If your cat won't use the litter trays provided, you may need to make them more appealing.

Consider:

- Switching to another brand of litter which allows you to remove deposits more easily and so is most hygienic and most acceptable to tiny kitten paws.
- Providing litter trays with lower sides.
- Adding or removing covers to the trays.
- Moving the trays to a quieter area.
- Discontinuing the use of deodorants.
- Cleaning them more frequently.
- Increasing the number of litter trays if there's more than one cat in your household.
- Don't forget to increase the litter tray sizes as the kitten grows. Not just size of the tray but height of the sides will need to grow along with your kitten.

Some cats will urinate outside the litter tray when they have a urinary infection, so a visit to your veterinarian may also be necessary.

Scratching

Scratching is normal and necessary behaviour for your kitten. If you find your cat is scratching in unwanted locations, such as your furniture, it probably means that the current scratching facilities provided are not adequate. Look at providing more scratching areas with scratch posts, or check your current scratch sites are located in the right places or at the right height for your cat. Never use a water spray on your kitten to stop unwanted behaviour, for more advice please visit: www.icatcare.org/advice/scratching-on-furniture-and-carpets

Game on

The best games and toys for your cat will encourage your pet to stalk, pounce, chase and bat objects with their paws in a safe way.

- Your cat will love toys that move, so toys on a string are likely to be a big hit – however, to make sure they don't choke, your pet should always have supervision when playing with string toys.
- You can also buy mechanical toys for your cat to chase around.
- For cats that like to climb and hide, get an activity centre.



LOOKING GOOD

Grooming is important for your pet's health and a nice way for you to spend quality time with your new friend. Here are some tips:

- Establish a regular location and time for grooming
- Brush in the direction of hair growth – brushing against the hair pattern may be uncomfortable
- Long-haired cats should be groomed every day to help prevent painful mats and knots, while short-haired cats may only need grooming once a week. Start grooming as soon as possible if your kitten has long hair. This will be a daily necessity and so it's important to help your kitten get used to it as soon as you can.
- While you normally don't need to clean a cat's ears, use grooming time as a chance to check them for dirt, debris or redness
- This is also a great opportunity to get your cat used to having their face and feet handled. This makes life much easier for your vet, should they need to examine your cat in future.
- If your cat has access to a scratching post or similar - you shouldn't need to top cut your cat's nails. For more advice: www.icatcare.org/advice/scratching-on-furniture-and-carpets

When you first bring your kitten home, it's important to give them time to adjust to new surroundings.



Kitten-proofing your home

Please visit: www.icatcare.org/advice/making-your-home-cat-friendly

- Use covered rubbish bins in your home and garage.
- Keep kitchen countertops clean and clear of food items to reduce temptation.
- Store household chemicals and poisons in a locked cabinet.
- Keep toilet lids down so your kitten can't fall in or drink from the bowl.
- Keep electrical cords and wires out of sight or secured to walls.
- Keep dangling blind and curtain cords out of reach.
- Keep doors to washing machine and dryers shut.
- remove poisonous plants that kittens may nibble.

Check out: www.icatcare.org/advice-centre/cat-care/cats-and-poisonous-plants

During the first few days:

- Give your kitten a quiet, warm room of their own for the first few days and gradually expose the rest of the home to your new pet – let your kitten come out to explore and socialise in their own time.
- Try to keep the household fairly quiet and ensure that all family members are interacting with the kitten in a gentle and calm way.
- Show your kitten where the food, water and litter trays are.
- Take lots of time to interact and play with your kitten – this will help create a bond that will last a lifetime.
- Kittens get tired quickly so allow them to have quiet and sleeping time.

Indoors or outdoors?

Once your kitten is fully vaccinated, you may decide to start letting them go outdoors. If this is the case, you're unlikely to have to worry about your kitten getting enough exercise. Your pet will instinctively roam, hunt, climb and explore – getting quite a workout in the process. You may decide to start letting them outdoors or your vet may recommend keeping your female kitten indoors until she is neutered, to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. It's also a good idea to get your kitten microchipped before they go out!

If you choose an indoor life for your kitten, you'll need to make sure your pet still gets an outlet for their natural predatory instincts like hunting, climbing and scratching. Your cat will also need exercise. All these needs can be met through play.

You'll want your kitten to become a cat that relates well to people and is a friend and companion. Keep in mind, though, that cats have a very short socialisation phase – the first 2 - 8 weeks of life are a critical time for behavioural and social development. You won't get your kitten until after this time but it's still a good idea to introduce new, supervised experiences beyond this time.



People

People come in all different shapes and sizes and your kitten should have the opportunity to encounter them all. Get your pet used to strangers, but be careful that they don't scare or overwhelm your kitten with a strong show of affection.

Your kitten should be socialised with children as early as possible, as your pet may reject them later if they haven't become used to them early on. If there are children at your home, make sure to teach them that your kitten is not a toy and playtime must end when the kitten gets tired.

Please visit: www.icatcare.org/advice/introducing-cats-and-children



Other cats and pets

Because smell is the most important sense for cats, before introducing your kitten to any other cats you may have in your home, it's a good idea to transfer some of their scents to your kitten's coat. Mix the scents by first stroking your resident pets and then the kitten without washing your hands.

If you've got other pets in the house, introduce your new kitten to them gradually and separate them at any sign of aggression. Acceptance can take time, so don't ever leave them unsupervised until you're certain they're getting along well.

Please visit the icatcare.co.uk site for more help:

www.icatcare.org/advice/introducing-a-cat-or-kitten-to-your-dog

www.icatcare.org/advice/introducing-an-adult-cat-to-your-cat

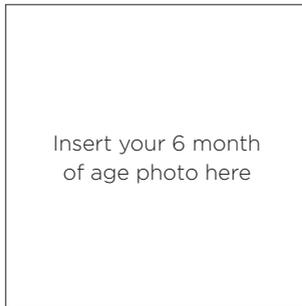




**All the nutrition a kitten needs
is in Hill's **Vet Essentials****

Visit us online and register
for monthly newsletters

**www.hillspet.co.uk/vetessentials
www.hillspet.ie/vetessentials**



Insert your 6 month
of age photo here

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Middleton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8JZ.

Hill's Customer Service Helpline is staffed by experienced
Dietary Consultants. Please contact us if you need help or
information about any Hill's product:

0800 282 438 / 1-800 626 002 (ROI)

