



BlackHawk®

Every ingredient matters

My new kitten

A comprehensive guide

The Black Hawk Commitment

The history, achievements and ambitions of Black Hawk are quite remarkable – born of the unshakeable commitment to giving our pets the best care, we are a brand like no other.

Our story is one of a constant search for better; better ingredients and better products.

Our Belief

We believe people feel better about themselves when they feed great food. It shows how they care.





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Preparing for your new kitten

Congratulations on your new 'purr' baby!

Before your new bundle of joy arrives home, take time to plan and get your home ready to ensure your new friend stays safe and has everything he or she needs.

It is important to make sure your house is safe by considering the following points before you bring your kitten home:

- All parts of the Lily plant can be very toxic to kittens and cats, so make sure you get rid of lilies in pots or flower arrangements. Other common household plants and flowers may also be poisonous to cats - keep all plants away if you are unsure.
- Many household cleaners, pesticides and human medications can be poisonous to cats so make sure they are locked away.
- Your kitten will quickly learn to jump and can be caught off-guard by things such as balconies, unscreened windows, opened washing machines and toilets with the seat up, so make sure these areas are secure.
- Kittens may become curious about strings and ropes which can be dangerous if chewed and swallowed. Electrical leads can also be harmful if chewed.

Make sure you have a few of the essentials to keep your kitten happy:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter tray liners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Flea treatments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter tray | <input type="checkbox"/> Worming treatments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter scoop | <input type="checkbox"/> Collar and ID tag |



- ☐ Carry cage
- ☐ Bedding
- ☐ Toys
- ☐ Scratching post



- ☐ Harness/lead
- ☐ Crate/enclosure



First days

Bringing your kitten home

The first day can be both a daunting and an exciting time for both your new kitten and for the whole family.

Your little kitten will need a safe and confined area to help them settle in. It is best to start out by creating a designated 'safe space' in an enclosure, a crate or a small room.

Set them up with a soft bed, toys, food, water and a litter tray. Try to make their area a positive place to be by spending lots of play and cuddle time there. You can then gradually give your kitten a larger space to explore under supervision as they settle in and become more confident.

Other pets may become very curious about the new addition to the household, so make sure you introduce them slowly and safely, keeping the following tips in mind:

- For the first few days, it is best to let them all have their own space and get used to the new smells in the house.
- Over the next few days let your other pets spend short periods of time near the kitten area under supervision.
- In time they will usually all be happy to share their space without all of the stress and over excitement.

“Your little kitten will need a safe and confined area to help them settle in. It is best to start out by creating a designated ‘safe space’ in an enclosure, a crate or a small room.”



Introducing your kitten to the family

Initially your kitten is likely to be cautious around new pets and people.

Children

When introducing your children to the new kitten, you'll want to supervise their initial interactions and share some ground rules:

- No rough playing allowed. Explain that tail-pulling, ear-pulling and teasing will upset their new friend.
- It is important to educate your children about the correct way to handle a kitten. Grabbing, pinching and picking up by the scruff should be discouraged. Instruct them to place one hand under the kitten's chest, just behind their front legs. Place the other hand under the kitten's hindquarters, and gently lift with both hands.
- Stay calm. Help your kids understand that they shouldn't startle your kitten by shouting or raising their voices, even when they do something wrong.



The best of both worlds

As a new pet owner, you'll want to decide early on whether your new friend will live indoors with you or have the freedom to roam between the house and the yard. This is a difficult decision that depends on multiple factors, including whether or not you live close to a busy street or in a more secluded area. Check your local legislation for any restrictions that may be in place regarding roaming pet cats.

Consider discussing the issue with your vet who will know the general and local risks. If you choose to keep your new kitten indoors, you can still give them a glimpse of the great outdoors. Here are a few ways for them to experience the excitement, without the danger:

- A kitty window verandah. These boxes attach to the outside of your home and act as bay windows for your new friend. They can recline, and enjoy the smells and sights of the outdoors, while safely enclosed.
- A birdfeeder makes great kitty TV, creates the perfect scenery for gazing, and gives your cat the opportunity to bat at the birds without harming them.
- Perches. Ideally, your cat wants to see the world from all angles. You can purchase cat perches – platforms placed next to the window – in a variety of shapes and sizes at your local pet store. Or, you can simply use a shelf, sofa, chair or small table as a perch. For safety, be sure to open windows with cat safe security grills.
- There are a variety of outdoor cat enclosures that include everything from cat walks to free-standing kitty “condos” and “penthouses” you can erect in your backyard. You'll want to make sure your enclosure has strong roofing, cat furniture for sleeping and playing, plenty of shade and a steady supply of water. Consider staying outside while your cat is in their enclosure to prevent pet theft or run-ins with neighbourhood dogs or getting in fights with stray felines.



Feeding

Feline nutrition

Proper nutrition during critical growth periods will help your kitten mature into a strong, healthy adult cat.

Rapid growth stage: 2-6 months

After kittens are weaned, they enter a stage of rapid growth, which lasts through to 6 months of age. They need a balanced diet to deliver the nutrients and energy to sustain such rapid development. Kittens have up to twice the energy needs of adult cats on a kilogram-per-kilogram basis. But their smaller mouths, teeth, and stomachs limit the amount of food they can digest during a single meal. Because every bite must be packed with nutrition, kittens require a diet that's specifically formulated for growth. The best choice is pet food with animal-based proteins that is highly digestible, nutrient dense, and designed to meet a kitten's unique nutritional needs.

Adolescence: 7-12 months

As kittens approach adult size, nutritional requirements begin to change again. The rate of growth begins to slow and activity levels may decline. During this stage, kittens begin to look like adults, but they are still growing and need the special nutrition found in a good quality kitten food.



Which kitten food is right for your kitten?

Kittens should be fed a complete and balanced premium kitten diet that is designed to meet their nutritional needs.

Cats are obligate carnivores and need a high quality source of protein and essential amino acids. Taurine is one essential amino acid that must be provided in feline diets to avoid serious disease.

Balanced minerals and fatty acids levels are also important for proper and healthy development of the growing kitten.

Black Hawk Kitten Food

Specially formulated for growing kittens, Black Hawk Kitten Food contains premium ingredients and balanced nutrition to optimise your kitten's health and vitality while they're growing, developing and learning.

Full of real meat and vegetables, with high levels of protein, and the correct balance of vitamins and minerals, Black Hawk Original Kitten Food, available in both wet and dry, will provide your kitten with all the energy they need to grow, learn and play.



How to feed your kitten

Once you've chosen the best diet for your kitten, you'll want to make sure you're feeding them in the best way possible to keep their finicky nature in check. Keep these tips in mind:

- Give your kitten access to fresh water at all times. Water bowls should be separated from their eating and toileting areas. Cats do not enjoy the scent of food while drinking.
- Choose ad-lib or portion-controlled feeding.

Many choose ad-lib feeding, leaving food out at all times. Because kittens generally eat only what they need, grazing up to 20 times a day, this may work for many of our feline friends.

However, some kittens may overeat if fed ad-lib particularly if they live indoors and as they approach adulthood. In this instance measuring the food is a good alternative. Discuss your kitten's eating habits with your vet to decide which one is right for your pet.

Refer to the back of your kitten food pack for suggested feeding guidelines. It's important to note that every kitten is different, so adjust quantities based on the specific needs of your kitten.

Changing from kitten to adult cat food

When your cat is about 12 months of age, it's time to switch to a maintenance formula adult cat food. At this age, cats no longer need the extra calories and nutrients for growth supplied by kitten food. However, it is still important to feed them a high quality diet to maintain

health and vitality. It is a good idea to make all changes in their diet gradually to minimise the risk of upset tummies. Monitor their weight and body condition during the transition, and adjust feeding portions if necessary.



Day 1 - 2,
25% new food



Day 3 - 4,
50% new food



Day 5 - 6,
75% new food



Day 7,
100% new food



Training

Basic training tips

Kittens do a lot of learning in their first year of life, which makes this the best time to start teaching them your house rules. Training helps you and your kitten understand each other better.

Kittens learn best through repeated positive encouragement and reward. Punishing kittens will cause them stress and can make them afraid to try new things – and we need them to trust you and try new things in order to learn.

Set some house cat rules with the family and try to be consistent. The key with training is to reward immediately to help your kitten associate an action with the signal you are giving.

Decide on a word or signal for each action you want to train. For example, as a signal to ask for them to hop off your lap or furniture, you may choose to say ‘down’ and/or point at the ground. You would give this signal when you can see your kitten is about to step down off your lap or furniture and then reward them immediately for doing the right thing.

TIP: Kitten training

Avoid punishing your kitten if they are showing a behaviour you do not want to encourage, such as biting or scratching. Instead, simply ignore them and give them attention again when they are showing the right behaviours.





Toilet training

Kittens usually start learning to use the litter box at 3 or 4 weeks of age. Once you have settled your kitten into their new environment, you will need to determine the best place for their litter tray.

- Choose an area away from your kitten's food and water where they can have privacy, away from high-traffic areas, and where you are happy for the litter tray to remain permanently. Avoid frequently moving the tray so as not to confuse and stress your kitten.
- Begin by gently placing your kitten into the litterbox, a couple of minutes after they have finished eating, and a couple of minutes after waking from sleep. Allow your kitten time to sniff around the litter box and encourage them to dig around the litter.
- Give your kitten lots of praise to reinforce their good behavior.
- Clean the litter box regularly. Remove solid and liquid waste daily at minimum. Clean the litter box weekly to keep odours under control. Use warm, soapy water — not scented disinfectants that your kitten may dislike. Use litter tray liners for easy cleaning if necessary.

Make short work of accidents:

- Soak up urine with paper towels and remove faeces with a poo bag.
- Treat soiled areas using a pet suitable stain and odour spray that contains odour neutralising enzymes, instead of ammonia based solutions which only will encourage remarking.
- On carpeting, blot the stain — don't scrub — and work from the outside toward the centre.

TIP: Choosing the right litter

If the litter tray is located near living areas, then you might want to consider a litter with good odour control such as crystal, clumping, or natural litter. If they are located away from living areas in a garage where smell is not an issue, then a clay-based litter may be right for you.



Troubleshooting

Litter box issues

It can be frustrating to live with a wonderful cat that can't seem to find their way to the litter box. Fortunately, if you take a calm, rational approach to uncovering the cause and treating the problem, you'll increase your chances for success. Start with this checklist:

- Is the box too small? It should be big enough for your cat to step inside and turn around, ideally at least 1.5 times the length of their body. If it's too small, they'll avoid it.
- Does your cat have litter box trauma? If they have had a bad experience (e.g. loud noise) while they were in or near the box, they may have developed a negative litter box association. While they'll step into the box, they may leave the box very quickly before using it. Seek advice from your veterinarian.
- Is the box dirty? A cat's sense of smell is much more powerful than a human's, so if you can smell it they can smell it even more intensely. Be sure to clean the box every day.
- Do they dislike the litter? Try an alternative litter.
- Sharing the same litter box can be stressful for some cats. Multi-cat households should have one litter box per cat, plus one extra box.

- Are they stressed/anxious? If your cat is pottying in the wrong place, this is a possibility. This can be due to stress from neighbourhood/family pets, new additions to the family or moving house/renovations. Be sure to get your veterinarian's opinion for advice and treatment.

If you address all of these issues, and your cat is still urinating outside the litter box, they may have a medical problem. An increase in frequency of urination, large volumes of urine, straining or discomfort when urinating, and diarrhoea or constipation are all signs of illness. If you notice any of these, schedule an appointment with your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Spraying and marking

When cats feel insecure, they may spray to mark their territory. This is normal. Avoid rubbing your cat's nose in it, or putting them in the litter box afterwards, because cats take this punishment to heart and can contribute to litter box trauma.



Taking your cat out of the house

You may want to take your kitten out of the house for many reasons, including trips to the vet or groomers, or perhaps even for some on-lead adventures in the yard.

As a safety precaution, your kitten should be safely restrained whenever they are away from the home. It is important to get your kitten used to a collar/lead/harness from an early age. Consider the following tips:

- Start with a soft collar with an elastic or safety release clip.
- Put the collar on them for short periods of time when they are eating or happily distracted to make wearing the collar a positive experience.
- Once your kitten is used to its collar, make sure to leave it on at all times.
- Before you take your kitten on outdoor adventures, practice walking them inside the home with a well fitted harness and lead.

When travelling with your kitten in the car or where there are other animals, a carry cage is the best way to keep your kitten safe and calm.



TIP: Basic training

Get your kitten used to the carrier at home by leaving it in their area with some treats and food inside, even when there are no plans to travel.

Health

Vaccinations

Ensure the best start to life for your fur baby with regular visits to the vet. Your veterinarian will be able to advise on everything from how well your kitten is growing, to how to prevent against common diseases.

Kittens should have their first visit to the vet at around 6-8 weeks of age. At each visit, the vet will collect some general information on your kitten and will give them a thorough health check. All kittens should be vaccinated to prevent common and preventable diseases.

The first vaccination is usually given by the vet at their first visit. Booster vaccinations are given every 3-4 weeks until 12-16 weeks of age, however vaccination protocols may vary. Kittens should be kept away from unvaccinated cats and public areas until their final kitten vaccination is completed. Adult cats need to be given a booster vaccination every 1-3 years as recommended by your vet.

CORE VACCINES

Recommended for all kittens

Feline parvovirus (FPV)

Feline calicivirus (FCV)

Feline herpesvirus (FHV-1)

ADDITIONAL VACCINES

As recommended by your vet

Feline leukaemia virus (FeLV)

Chlamydia felis

Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)

TIP: Vaccinations

Your local vet will be able to give you the best advice on the right vaccination protocol for your kitten.



TIP: Worming tips

It can be a challenge to give some cats their worming tablet. Try using a syrup or ask the staff at your vet hospital to demonstrate the best ways to give tablets.

Worm, flea and tick treatment

It is important to protect your cat from parasites. Parasite treatments should be started soon after taking your kitten home. There are several convenient treatments on the market that can be used for kittens. Check with your vet for recommendations on the best treatment options available.

Fleas breed very quickly and can build up in the environment that the kitten spends its time in. Just a few fleas can quickly become an infestation, so don't leave them unchecked.

Intestinal worms can make your kitten unwell and some feline intestinal worms can also cause disease in humans. Kittens should be wormed with an intestinal wormer more frequently as they are more prone to having worms than older cats. Seek advice from your vet as to what is the most appropriate worming schedule for your circumstances.



Microchipping

Microchipping not only identifies your kitten for life, but it can also save their life. Some kittens will have a microchip when you adopt them and others will need to have this done at the veterinary clinic. Make sure you register your kitten with the National and/or State Registry and always keep them clearly identified with a collar and tag with their name and contact details.

Desexing

To prevent unwanted breeding and prevent some common health issues, cats that are not going to be used for breeding should be desexed by a vet before 6 months of age.

Desexing involves staying in hospital for a general anaesthetic and surgery. Your kitten will need to rest when they get home and may have stitches which need to be kept clean and dry. The vet or nurse may ask to see your kitten again after 7-14 days to check that they are healing and remove their stitches.

Dental care

Four out of five cats over the age of three years have some degree of dental disease, which becomes more severe with age if left untreated.

This can be a real problem for you and your pet because it can lead to more serious problems such as illnesses related to the heart, liver and kidney.

Take preventive action with your kitten with annual dental checks at your vet. Dental checks provide an opportunity for you to discover whether your pet has an existing problem which has gone unnoticed.

Brushing their teeth daily is also a great way to keep their teeth and gums in good health. Cats can be trained to enjoy having their teeth brushed, especially if started at a young age. Make sure you use a toothpaste that is appropriate for cats.

TIP: Dental care

One of the ways to reduce plaque and tartar build-up is to encourage your kitten to chew on specially designed dental treats and toys.

Wellbeing

Play and stimulation

Exercise and play are not just important for physical health but are equally important for learning and development.

Cats are natural predators and love to stalk, chase and pounce. If they are provided with games and toys that allow them to use these natural behaviours in a healthy way, they are less likely to direct these behaviours towards their human (and non-human) housemates. If they do direct these behaviours at you, simply end the play session by walking away and try again later.



Provide them with lots of different small toys and some toys on a dangle rope for them to bat, toss and pounce on. Feeder toys containing food or treats are a great way to space out meals and keep your kitten busy. Make sure to rotate the toys regularly to keep it interesting.

Cats look at the world very differently to their human friends. They love to climb, hide and hunt. By providing them with a 'cat territory' to do this in, you can help keep your kitten mentally stimulated and in good physical shape.

Set up a 'kitten territory' area by providing tunnels, boxes and hiding holes for them to explore. They love to climb and be up high, so think vertically and plan out some safe platforms for them to jump onto. Make sure they have a cat scratching post to work those nails onto.



TIP: Play and stimulation

Kittens just love jumping into, rolling about and hiding in cardboard boxes.

Grooming

In addition to maintaining skin and coat health, grooming is a great way to spend some quality time with your kitten, as well as giving them a quick health check in the process.

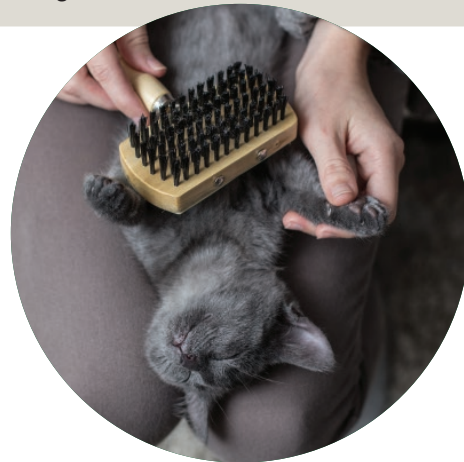
By regularly running your hands over your little kitten, you can start to get them used to being handled before you introduce the brush. Choose a brush that is gentle on your kitten's skin and start with short grooming sessions. Lift them up onto a table with a non-slip surface and brush them gently from head to tail and toes.

Different coat types benefit from different brushes. For example, the slicker brushes are great for most fluffy or short coats, whereas shedding rakes are perfect for heavy shedders and tangled coats.

Getting your kitten used to having their feet touched while they are young will make the important task of trimming nails much nicer for you both. Only the very tip of the nail needs to be trimmed. If you are unsure of how much of the nail to trim, ask your vet to teach you how to avoid cutting too much and injuring the nail quick.

TIP: Getting them used to being handled

While you are grooming your kitten, give it a quick check over. This is good practice for them and helps you notice any early signs of health problems. Have a look at their eyes and ears; check their teeth and gums; and look over their bodies for any sore spots or skin and coat changes.



Troubleshooting

Frequently asked questions

What types of treats should I give my cat?

Although there are a range of treats on the market, it's always best to choose the healthy option that is designed for kittens. Select a treat that contains real meat as the main ingredient and uses natural ingredients. Treats should make up no more than 10% of your kitten's diet, with the other 90% coming from a quality, correctly balanced cat food.

How do I discourage my kitten from scratching the furniture?

Kittens need to scratch to keep their nails in good health, so make sure they have a specially designed cat scratching post nearby.

You can try spraying Aristopet Catnip Spray on the scratching post to make it more appealing, and put toys around it to make it fun.

Use a scratch deterrent such as Aristopet No Scratch Spray on the furniture that you want to move them away from (but always spray a test patch somewhere discreet when using sprays to make sure it doesn't damage the furniture surface).



Should I feed my kitten table scraps?

We do not recommend feeding your kitten human food unless specifically instructed by your veterinarian. Cats have different nutritional needs to people and the wrong foods can upset their stomachs and lead to nutritional imbalances. Some human foods such as chocolate, onions, grapes and sultanas are toxic for cats. Stick to feeding your kitten a balanced food that is specially designed for them.

What do I do if my kitten or cat goes missing?

Start by looking all over the property and try rattling the food bag or tin to lure them out of hiding. If your cat does not show up, follow these steps:

Talk to your neighbours and call your local vet clinics and animal shelters to see if anyone has any helpful information. Leave your details and a photo with a description of your cat with them.

Put some food, water and their bed out the front to help them to find the familiar smells of home. If they do find their way home they will be fed and hydrated. Place a 'lost pet' ad on websites dedicated to help finding lost pets, and on social media pages including relevant community pages. Add a "missing" note on your cat's microchip registration, which will be seen when the cat's chip is scanned. Regularly check the 'found pet' pages online for any updates that may arise.

Post flyers in the area and place an advert in your local paper with your details, a photo of your cat and a description of them and any distinctive features they may have, also the details of the last time, date and place you saw them.

Don't give up, if your kitten is still missing, simply work through these steps again.

Resources and further information

Masterpet Australia – masterpet.com.au

Black Hawk Pet Care – blackhawkpetcare.com.au



BlackHawk®

Every ingredient matters

CONTACT US

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