

# Your new cat or kitten



**...the first few weeks**

This leaflet contains everything you need to know to help your new cat or kitten settle down in his new home. Here at Cats Protection it can take months to nurse a neglected cat before he is well enough to be rehomed, so it is very important that you and your new cat get off to a good start.

## Arriving home with your cat

Keep your cat to a confined area with doors and windows closed. Have a litter tray ready in a private corner before you even let him out of the carrier. Place his bed and feeding bowls in a quiet place away from draughts. Close bedroom and kitchen doors – timid cats will try to hide under beds and kitchen units.

## Food and drink

In the early stages he will appreciate being fed little and often, providing lots of opportunity for you both to get to know each other. Discuss the cat's previous diet with the fosterer or Shelter staff. It is better to feed your cat the diet he is familiar with to avoid digestive upsets.

Cow's milk is not suitable for some cats because the level of lactose it contains can cause diarrhoea. Water is all your cat needs and must be available at all times.



**Make sure your cat receives his yearly vaccination booster**

## Arriving home with your kitten

Let the kitten inspect his new home, his litter tray and his bed and keep his attention until he settles in.

**DON'T** leave him on his own. Offer him a little food and generally keep an eye on him until he tires and goes to sleep.

**DON'T** let the family pull him about too much or treat him like a toy. He will be frightened and distressed after leaving his mum, brothers and sisters, so lots of cuddles and tender loving care are needed. Give him a cuddly toy to snuggle up to at night and make sure he is warm. Play before bedtime will ensure a good night for kitten and family alike. If he cries, a radio playing low may help, or try placing his bed in the room with you for company. Get your kitten used to staying in at night, safe from traffic and theft.

## Growing appetite

He needs four meals a day of proprietary kitten food, and clean water must always be available. As he grows, his appetite will increase, so if he cries and looks for more food let him have a bit more. Kittens will not overfeed themselves; they will go back to the food as required. Don't leave uneaten food around for too long though, especially in hot weather. For more information on feeding, see our leaflet *Feeding Felines*.

## Vaccinations

It is important to have your kitten vaccinated against cat 'flu and feline enteritis and feline leukaemia (combined vaccines); these can be given when he is nine and 12 weeks old, in consultation with your vet. It is best to leave vaccination until one or two weeks after the kitten leaves our care. This allows him a chance to settle in his new home and also to ensure he is not incubating infections such as the 'flu

## The great outdoors

Keep your cat in for at least three weeks allowing him to look out of the windows to familiarise himself with his surroundings. He may cry to be let out but if he is given his freedom too early then he runs the risk of becoming a stray. When you first let him out, do so before a meal so that he comes back to eat and always stay with him on his first few trips. Do not carry him outdoors in your arms. If you are particularly concerned, use a harness. If for some reason you do lose your new cat, please tell your local Cats Protection Branch. He may have already been reported to us as having been found.

Remember, always keep your cat in at night, safe from traffic and theft.



virus. Keep him indoors until his injections are completed. Your vet will issue a certificate which should be updated when booster injections are given every year.

## Introducing other pets

If you have another pet, give them time to get used to each other. It may not be love at first sight but normally most pets find their own level and settle down quite amicably in the end. It may take about four weeks for them to become used to each other.

The introduction must be gradual, letting each pet get a view or the scent of the other without any actual confrontation. If in the same room, make sure there are places to hide so that eye to eye contact is avoided. Give the already resident pets a lot more fuss and don't let them see you give too much attention to the newcomer.

Never leave a kitten and a dog alone together. For more information, see our leaflet *Living in Harmony*.

## Health insurance

As cats are under stress when they come to us, their resistance to infection is reduced and so your cat is more likely to have health problems when you first take him in than at any other time. It is worth considering taking out health insurance to cover the cost of veterinary fees.

## Neutering

A cat can become pregnant at five months old and produce a litter at seven months. Remember too that an adult cat can, during its lifetime, be responsible for over 20,000 descendants!

Cats Protection believes most strongly that cats, both male and female, should be neutered and not permitted to reproduce. We home a cat or kitten subject to your written agreement to this policy.

An adult cat from Cats Protection will have already been neutered or arrangements made for the operation.

If you have accepted a kitten you will be

given a date when he is old enough to be neutered (five months old or as advised by your vet) and you should also have been given a Neutering Certificate. It is important that you have this signed by your vet and that you return it to your local CP Branch as soon as possible to keep records up to date. Failure to return the certificate will lead us to assume that your cat has not been neutered and we will contact you to find out why.

### **Females**

Female cats should not be allowed to have a litter before being spayed.

It is a common misconception to believe that a cat should have a litter first; a litter does not make them any more contented, nor will they live longer. On the contrary, mammary cancer is more common in cats who have had kittens. Many people seem to think that because they have 'managed to find homes' for the kittens that this is a satisfactory end to the matter. Sadly, we see the stage beyond this when thousands of kittens become homeless because of thoughtless owners who have lost interest in the new kitten. We are therefore determined that none of our cats should breed and add to the problem.

### **Males**

Male cats are far more affectionate when neutered; they will not become involved in fights over female cats and they will not be inclined to roam with the resultant risk of becoming lost or injured. They are much less likely to mark their territory by spraying urine around the house.

The cat AIDS virus, FIV, is more common in unneutered cats as it is transmitted by fighting.

### **Identification**

We recommend that your cat is microchipped. The ideal time for this is when he is at the vet's being neutered. If you move house, make sure that your cat's details are updated on the microchip database.



### **Settling in**

Unfortunately not all cats settle in all homes. Cats, like people, are all different and what suits one may not suit another. We try very hard to match a cat and new owner and it does take time for him to settle – please be patient. Don't worry if he doesn't eat straight away – it can sometimes be four or five days before a new cat starts to eat properly.

If you find after a while he does not seem to be settling in, contact your local CP Branch. Do not turn him out to become a stray. Remember, he has already been through one traumatic experience and needs your patience and care. Your local Branch is always there to help with advice.

## Transporting your cat

Always use a secure, covered, ventilated container lined with layers of newspapers. A normally placid cat can become quite frantic and could easily escape from your grip and become lost.

The correct way to immobilise a cat, should an emergency arise, is to grip him by the loose skin at the back of his neck.



If using a collar, please ensure it is elasticated with your name and address firmly attached. Cats Protection recommends quick release collars or one of the charity's own SafeCat Identity Circlets. Many strays turn up with collars but with no means of identification. Screw barrel address holders can work loose and eventually become detached.

## Viruses and parasites

Your new cat will have been treated by us if he was found to have fleas. You should also carry out this treatment on a regular basis. In addition, cats and kittens need regular treatment for roundworm or tapeworm parasite infection. Effective worming pills and flea powders, sprays, drops, etc. are available from your local veterinary surgery.

If your cat sneezes with any degree of regularity, this could signify the onset of cat 'flu. This can be treated but it must have veterinary attention. A cat can incubate the 'flu virus for at least two weeks without it being apparent.

If you intend to board your cat in a cattery at any time you will require a Vaccination Certificate from your vet. Think ahead and have your cat vaccinated five or six weeks before boarding.

## Thank you

Thank you for reading this leaflet. You may wish to help us in our work by giving a donation or assisting us with our fund-raising. We are self-supporting and, without your help, we would not be able to carry out our cat rescue work.

You can contact our Branch/Shelter at:

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Your new cat/kitten's name is:

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Vaccinations are due:

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Flea treatment is due:

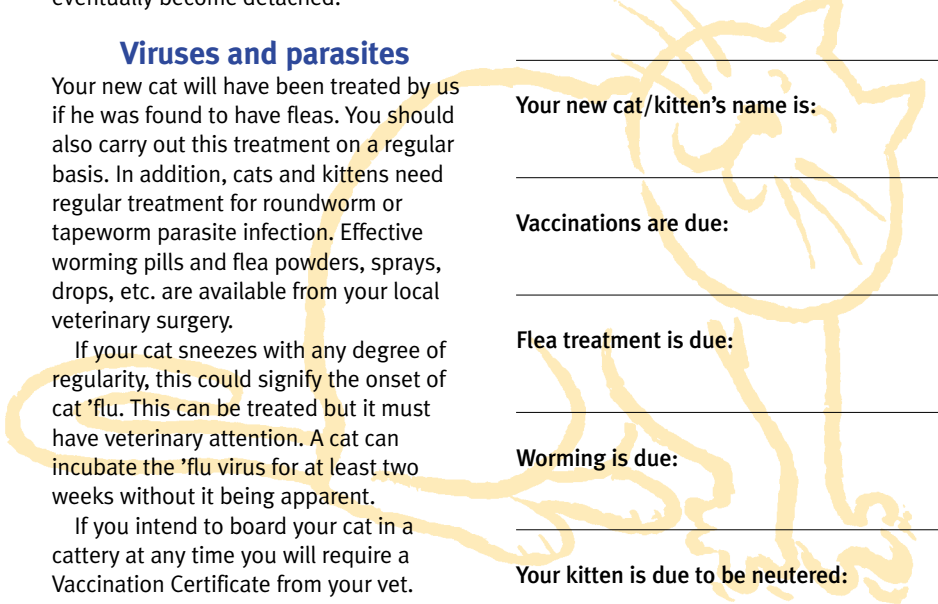
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Worming is due:

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Your kitten is due to be neutered:

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# Membership form for Cats Protection

## Membership Rates

Please enrol me as a:

Life Member £200   
Annual UK Member £12   
Annual Senior Member £6   
Annual Cool Cats Member £5   
(Recommended age 16 and under)

Europe £18   
USA/Canada \$48   
Elsewhere £24

Donation £

**Total Enclosed** £

## Your details:

Membership No. (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Mrs. Miss. Ms. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

All membership includes a free copy of the bi-monthly journal *The Cat*, except Cool Cats members who receive six copies of *Cool Cats* annually.

## Four ways to pay:

**1 By cheque/postal order**  
payable to **The Cats Protection League**

**2 By direct debit**  
please contact us at the address below  
for a full membership leaflet

**3 By credit/debit card**  
freephone hotline:  
**0800 917 CATS (0800 917 2287)**

## 4 By credit/debit card:

I wish to pay by **VISA/MASTERCARD/DELTA/SWITCH**

Card number:

Card expiry date:

Switch cardholders only:

Issue number:

Start date:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send all forms to Supporter Services at the address below

NCK



17 Kings Road Horsham  
West Sussex RH13 5PN  
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(Calls charged at national rate)  
Fax: 08707 708 265

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Web: [www.cats.org.uk](http://www.cats.org.uk)  
Charity No. 203644  
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