



**bestforpet**

# **Your Kitten Starter Guide**

# Welcome to the exciting world of Kitten ownership!

This guide gives you tips to get your new bundle of joy off to the best start in life and ensure they can grow into a happy and healthy cat.

Getting a new kitten is an exciting and rewarding experience as well as a big responsibility.

This starts with providing them the proper nutrition, vaccinations, and parasite protection, as well as adequate mental and physical stimulation. These efforts should help establish a strong bond between you and your cat, while ensuring your furry family member gets the best start to life.



## Guide highlights:

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**Our veterinary team are here to help your kitten live their best life.**

# Vaccinations

Vaccinating a kitten is a necessary step to ensure the health and well-being of your new family member. Vaccines help protect kittens, and all cats, from a variety of serious and potentially fatal diseases, including feline herpes virus, feline calicivirus, feline panleukopaenia, feline immunodeficiency virus, feline leukaemia and feline chlamydia. Please ask your vet about the appropriate protection for your cat.

It is important to keep up with the recommended vaccination schedule for kittens, as this will help ensure your pet is properly protected from disease.



**If you're not sure when your kitten is due for their next vaccination, talk to our team to make sure your kitten is up to date.**

## Typical Kitten vaccination schedule:



**First vaccination**  
between 8-9 weeks old



**Second vaccination**  
between 12-13 weeks old



**Third booster\***  
at 16 weeks old

\*Check with your vet for the recommended vaccination schedule for your kitten



**Learn more about Vaccinations here.**



# Intestinal Worms

Intestinal worms are parasites that live in the intestines and feed off the nutrients that the kitten consumes. The most common intestinal worms in New Zealand are roundworm, tapeworm and hookworm. If left untreated, these parasites can cause a wide range of health problems, from malnutrition to anaemia and even death.

The most common way for kittens to become infected is by ingesting the eggs of the parasites, which can be found in contaminated soil, faeces, and other sources. Some intestinal worms also cause zoonoses, which means they can be transmitted to humans from cats.

To protect your kitten regular worming treatments should be provided.



## You should deworm your Kitten:

- Every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age
- Once a month until 6 months of age
- Every 3-6 months for life.



Learn more about  
Intestinal Worms [here.](#)



# Fleas and Ticks

## Fleas

Fleas commonly cause itching, skin disease, anaemia and allergic reactions in cats. What's more, they can be challenging to diagnose, as a kitten with flea allergy dermatitis may never actually be seen with fleas!

Immature stages of the flea lifecycle live in the cat's indoor and outdoor environment, while adult fleas live on the pet. Because of the nature of the flea lifecycle, it can take up to 12 weeks of effective treatment to clear a flea infestation once established. That's why flea treatments should be given all year round to prevent and control flea infestations effectively. Please ask our vet team for the best advice and recommended flea and tick prevention for your kitten.

## Ticks

The Cattle tick (or bush tick) is most common in the North Island, in part of the Tasman, West Coast and even Marlborough. These ticks see our pets as an ideal food service and can cause significant discomfort where they attach themselves. Irritation often follows and bacterial infections can occur.

Our team are happy to advise the best preventative for your puppy. Importantly, regardless of which prevention you choose, you should check your kitten for ticks regularly. This is especially important between the months of September to February, but remember, ticks can appear all year round. Run your fingertips over the coat, parting the fur and checking for lumps.

Most ticks reside on the head, neck, and ears, but you should take the time to check the entire body. If you see a tick, remove it carefully with tweezers and take it to your veterinarian. Your cat will need to be treated for infection.



## Tick prevention products include:

- Spot-on products
- Tick collars



Learn more about Fleas, Cattle Ticks and other Parasites here.

# Dental Health

Good dental health is essential for pets, just like it is for humans! Kittens can be prone to dental health problems, so it is best practice to start caring for their teeth from a young age.

Proper dental care can help prevent the build-up of plaque and tartar, which can then lead to gum disease and tooth decay, not to mention smelly breath. Dental disease can also impact negatively on other body systems and organs, as well as causing pain.

Regular brushing can remove any built-up debris and help keep your kitten's teeth and gums healthy as they get older.



**Kittens start teething at around 16 weeks of age, with most having all their adult teeth present at 6 months of age. We recommend a health check to make sure their oral health is on track.**



**Learn more about cat Dental Care here.**



# Microchipping

Microchipping your kitten helps ensure they are easily identified and is a legal requirement in most states and territories in Australia. A tiny chip is placed under the skin of the neck, between your kitten's shoulder blades.

If your kitten is found and taken to a vet or animal shelter, staff will use a scanner to retrieve the unique identifying code on your kitten's microchip, which is stored in nationwide registry databases. Therefore, it's important to keep these details up to date. If you're unsure of your kitten's microchip status, we can use our clinic scanner to check this. It only takes a few minutes and doesn't require an appointment.

**Talk to our team to confirm your current details registered on the chip.**



**Learn more about Microchipping here.**

# Weight and Nutrition

## Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight for your kitten is extremely important for their overall health and well-being. Keeping your kitten at their ideal weight helps to keep their bones, joints, and muscles strong and healthy.

In addition, keeping your pet at their ideal weight can help reduce the risk of serious health conditions such as urinary problems, diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.

Monitor your kitten's weight regularly and work with your veterinary healthcare team to make adjustments to ensure they stay at their ideal weight.

## Nutrition

Proper nutrition is another part of helping your kitten get the best start in life.

Kittens need a balanced diet that includes all the essential nutrients for growth and development. Proper nutrition is vital for kittens because it helps them to grow strong bones and muscles and provides the energy necessary for play and learning.

There are many premium-grade commercial foods that meet the exact nutritional requirements of growing kittens. Although brands vary in quality, premium brands generally provide higher-quality ingredients.

Therefore, we recommend you feed your kitten premium-grade kitten food in the daily amounts recommended by the manufacturer for the food you choose.

Talk to our veterinary team for advice on the appropriate nutrition for your kitten

**Kittens grow at approximately 100g per week until they are 5 months of age. This might not seem like much but is the equivalent of a toddler growing at 1kg a week!**



Learn more about Weight and Nutrition here.



# Desexing

Desexing your kitten doesn't just prevent them from having unwanted litters; it also reduces the risk of certain diseases and cancers, such as mammary gland tumours. Additionally, desexing can help to reduce urine marking and aggressive behaviours. A desexed cat also has less urge to roam, which makes them less vulnerable to being hit by a car or involved in a cat fight.

Many councils have introduced bylaws requiring cats to be desexed.

## When to desex?



Desexing is recommended between 5 and 6 months of age. Talk to your vet about when they recommend your cat should be desexed.



[Learn more about Desexing your cat here.](#)

# Behaviour

The experiences your kitten has during their early months of life influence the sort of adult cat they grow into.

It is important that your kitten has positive interactions with people and different things around the home during this period to help them grow into a confident and well-behaved member of the family.



[Talk to our team for advice on kitten behaviour and how communication, socialisation and training can benefit your new kitten.](#)



[Learn more about cat behaviour here.](#)



# Pet Insurance

Pet insurance provides financial protection in the event of unexpected veterinary bills arising from accidents or illnesses. In addition, pet insurance lets pet owners enjoy peace of mind knowing that, should the worst happen, their pets will be taken care of.

Pet insurance doesn't often cover routine care, such as vaccinations, dental cleaning, and flea and worm treatments, which is where a pet wellness program can be a great complimentary option!

Talk to our healthcare team about how pet insurance and wellness programs can save you money and give you peace of mind for the care of your precious new kitten.



Learn more about the difference between  
Pet insurance and Wellness Plans here.



# A healthy Kitten is a happy Kitten



## WellnessPlan<sup>®</sup>

Designed by Vets, the Best For Pet Wellness Plan covers your Kitten's typical health care needs in their first year and beyond all for a low monthly fee.



Unlimited  
vet consults



24/7 live vet  
support



\$250 off  
dental



Free  
Microchip



Core  
vaccinations

and  
more!

With no joining fees or waiting periods  
you can start saving now.

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