

Kitten Wellness Checklist: For Kittens (Approx. 8 Weeks to 6 Months) 🐱✅

Bringing a kitten home is a delightful experience! These early months are foundational for their health, development, and shaping them into a well-adjusted adult cat. Use this checklist to ensure you're providing the best possible care for your new furry family member.

1. Veterinary Care & Preventive Health 🩺

Frequency: Critical during this stage; follow vet's schedule closely

[] **Initial Vet Check-up:** Schedule within a few days of bringing kitten home.

[] **Kitten Vaccination Series:** Ensure all rounds of core vaccines (Feline Distemper/Panleukopenia, Feline Herpesvirus, Calicivirus) are completed, following your vet's schedule.

[] **Rabies Vaccination:** Administer as required by law and vet's recommendation.

[] **Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) Test:** Test for FeLV (and FIV) at your first vet visit.

[] **FeLV Vaccination:** Discuss if appropriate for your kitten's lifestyle (especially if outdoor access is planned).

[] **Parasite Screenings:** Multiple fecal exams to check for intestinal parasites (worms, giardia, coccidia).

[] **Deworming:** Administer as recommended by your vet based on screenings.

[] **Flea & Tick Control:** Start appropriate preventative as recommended by your vet.

[] **Heartworm Prevention:** Discuss if appropriate for your kitten (especially if outdoor access or in high-mosquito areas).

[] **Spay/Neuter Discussion:** Talk to your vet about the optimal timing for this procedure (often around 5-6 months).

[] **Microchip:** Ensure kitten is microchipped and registered with your contact information.

[] **Weight Monitoring:** Regular weigh-ins at vet visits to ensure healthy growth.

2. Nutrition 🍽️

Frequency: Daily

[] **High-Quality Kitten Food:** Feed a complete and balanced diet specifically formulated for kittens (AAFCO compliant).

[] **Wet Food Inclusion:** Strongly recommend incorporating wet food for increased hydration and palatability.

[] **Portion Control:** Measure food accurately according to manufacturer guidelines, adjusting for rapid growth and activity.

[] **Consistent Feeding Schedule:** Feed 3-4 times daily (as recommended for young kittens), then gradually reduce to 2-3 times daily as they grow.

[] **Kitten-Safe Treats:** Use small, soft, kitten-appropriate treats sparingly for positive reinforcement.

[] **Fresh Water:** Ensure constant access to clean, fresh water (consider multiple bowls, a pet fountain).

[] **Avoid Harmful Foods:** Absolutely no chocolate, grapes/raisins, onions, garlic, etc. (Kittens are curious!).

3. Exercise & Physical Activity 🏃🏻🎾

Frequency: Daily (age-appropriate)

[] **Multiple Short Play Sessions:** Engage in several short bursts of interactive play throughout the day (e.g., 5-10 minutes per session).

[] **Interactive Toys:** Use wand toys, laser pointers (with a tangible "catch" at the end!), small plush toys, and crinkle balls.

[] **Vertical Space:** Provide safe opportunities for climbing and jumping (e.g., small cat tree, sturdy shelves).

[] **Puzzle Feeders:** Introduce puzzle feeders to encourage natural hunting instincts and mental stimulation.

[] **Safe Play Area:** Ensure a secure and stimulating environment for play, free from hazards.

4. Training & Mental Stimulation

Frequency: Daily & Ongoing

[] **Litter Box Training:** Provide easy-to-access litter box(es) with preferred litter type. Scoop daily.

[] **Scratching Post Training:** Introduce various types of scratching posts (vertical, horizontal; sisal, cardboard) and encourage use.

[] **Appropriate Chewing:** Offer appropriate chew toys to redirect chewing away from household items.

[] **Basic Training (Optional):** Consider positive reinforcement clicker training for simple commands or tricks.

[] **Socialization:** Safely expose kitten to a wide variety of positive experiences: different people (all ages, appearances), gentle handling, various sounds, and (if appropriate and healthy) other friendly, vaccinated cats.

[] **Mental Enrichment:** Rotate toys, hide treats for "hunting," and offer window perches.

[] **Address Nipping/Rough Play:** Redirect play biting onto toys, not hands.

5. Grooming & Hygiene

Frequency: Weekly to Daily (depending on needs)

[] **Brushing:** Start regular brushing early to accustom them to grooming and manage shedding/prevent mats.

[] **Bathing:** Bathe only if necessary with kitten-specific shampoo. Make it a positive experience.

[] **Nail Trims:** Introduce nail trims early and frequently to get kitten comfortable. Trim small amounts regularly.

[] **Ear Checks:** Gently check ears weekly for redness, odor, or discharge.

[] **Eye Care:** Gently wipe away any eye discharge.

[] **Oral Care:** Start gently handling kitten's mouth and introducing a kitten toothbrush/finger brush with cat-specific toothpaste.

[] **Handling Practice:** Accustom kitten to being touched all over (paws, ears, mouth) in preparation for vet visits and grooming.

6. Safety & Environment

Frequency: Constant

[] **Kitten-Proof Home:** Securely store all toxic substances (cleaners, medications, chemicals), remove toxic plants, and electrical cords.

[] **Hazardous Objects:** Keep small objects (string, yarn, rubber bands, hair ties), plastic bags, and choking/ingestion hazards out of reach.

[] **Secure Windows & Screens:** Ensure all windows have secure screens to prevent falls or escapes.

[] **Safety Check:** Be mindful of household items like open washing machines/dryers, hot stoves, or recliners where a curious kitten could get hurt.

[] **ID Tag & Microchip:** Ensure kitten wears an ID tag (if collar is safe and breakaway) and is microchipped and registered.

[] **Supervision:** Constant supervision, especially in new environments or when exploring.

7. Socialization & Emotional Well-being

Frequency: Daily & Ongoing (especially during critical window: 3-9 weeks)

[] **Positive Experiences:** Expose kitten to a wide variety of positive sights, sounds, smells, people (all ages, appearances), and (if appropriate and healthy) other friendly, vaccinated cats.

[] **Gentle Handling:** Handle kitten frequently and gently to accustom them to human touch and build trust.

[] **Quality Time:** Spend dedicated time playing, cuddling, and interacting with your kitten.

[] **Comfort & Security:** Provide a safe, comfortable, and predictable environment with secure hiding spots.

[] **Patience & Positive Reinforcement:** Be patient with accidents and missteps; always use positive, reward-based methods.

[] **Monitor Stress:** Learn to recognize signs of fear or stress in your kitten and avoid overwhelming them.