

Care and Training

Most breeders recommend a high-quality dry food. Most cats can free feed without becoming overweight. Middle-aged cats (5-10) are most likely to have weight problems which can usually be controlled by switching to a low-calorie food. Many Maine Coons love water. Keep a good supply of clean, fresh water available at all times.

Most Maine Coons can be trained to accept a leash. Maine Coons are creatures of habit and they train easily if they associate the activity with something they want (they train humans easily too!).

Special Medical Problems

Individuals within any breed are fairly closely related, and have many characteristics in common. This includes genetic strengths and weaknesses. Certain genetic health disorders may be more or less of a problem in a particular breed than in other breeds. For example, a breed may have a slightly higher incidence of gum disease than the cat population as a whole, but have a lower incidence of heart disease or liver disease.

Genetic problems generally only affect a tiny minority of the breed as a whole, but since they can be eradicated by careful screening, most reputable breeders try to track such problems, both in their breeding stock and the kittens they produce. By working with a responsible breeder who will speak openly about health issues, you are encouraging sound breeding practices.

In the Maine Coon, the most common inherited health problems are hip dysplasia, which can produce lameness in a severely affected cat, and cardiomyopathy, which can produce anything from a minor heart murmur to severe heart trouble. Any breeder you talk to should be willing to discuss whether they've had any problems with these diseases in their breeding stock, or in kittens they've produced; how much screening they're doing, and why.

What are we doing with DNA testing of HCM? <http://pawpeds.com/pawacademy/health/mybpc3/>

What is feline herpes virus?

Feline herpes virus is an upper respiratory virus of cats. It is also known as rhinotracheitis virus. It is very common among cats, especially in environments where there are multiple cats or new cats are constantly interacting. The virus is spread through the air and replicates in the upper respiratory tract (nasal area, tonsils). The conjunctiva of the eye is also affected during the primary infection. Clinical signs of infection include sneezing and ocular and nasal discharge. In most cases the primary infection resolves with no residual ocular lesions. However, depending on the age when the cat is affected, the serotype of the virus (infectivity or strength of infection), and other factors, there may be various ocular signs. In very young cats, adhesions of the eyelids to each other or to the cornea may occur. Adult cats may experience recurrent conjunctivitis or corneal ulcers. The virus remains latent in the nerves that serve the eyes. When a cat is stressed or exposed to new serotypes (different strains) of herpes virus, the ocular disease can recur. There is some evidence that eosinophilic keratitis, plasmacytic-lymphocytic keratitis, corneal sequestrum, and some cases of anterior uveitis may be associated with feline herpes virus infection.

How do cats get feline herpes virus?

Most cats are affected as kittens, contracting the infection from their mothers. Stray cats, multi-cat households, and cats from households where new cats are constantly introduced are more likely to suffer infection. Feline herpes virus is not contagious to dogs or to humans but only affects cats.

How is feline herpes virus diagnosed?

History and clinical signs can diagnose ocular diseases caused by feline herpes virus. Aside from history and clinical signs, diagnostic tests for feline herpes virus include virus isolation, immunofluorescent antibody testing, polymerase chain reaction testing, serology, and cytology. Testing can be expensive and is generally reserved for specific cases. Tests that may not specifically detect the presence of herpes may be used to detect ocular disease caused by herpes. These tests include a Schirmer tear test (measuring tear production), corneal staining, and conjunctival biopsy.

How is feline herpes virus treated?

Treatment for feline herpes virus infections is nonspecific and generally directed at controlling secondary bacterial infection. A topical antibiotic such as tetracycline or erythromycin may be prescribed for use in the eye. Systemic antibiotics may also be prescribed.

Viralys Powder contains: 250 mg. L-Lysine per 1 rounded scoop. Scoop provided in container. Approximately 310 doses per container. Oral L-Lysine is recommended by many veterinary ophthalmologists at a dose of 250-500 mg twice daily.

Lysine competes with another amino acid, arginine, that herpes virus must have in order to reproduce. Lysine has been demonstrated to decrease the severity of ocular symptoms associated with herpes virus infection (1) and reduce viral shedding during periods of disease recurrence (2). Depending on symptoms, other medications such as topical antiviral drugs, topical polysulfated glycosaminoglycans, topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or topical interferon may be used. In some cases the ocular diseases resulting from feline herpes virus may require surgical intervention. The key to managing the clinical signs associated with feline herpes virus is controlling the cat's environment. Cats exposed to multiple cats (indoor-outdoor cats), cats in multiple cat households, or cats that are frequently introduced to new cats are difficult to keep disease free. Reducing stress by maintaining a stable routine is helpful in preventing recurrences of disease. Keep in mind that it is the nature of the virus to see recurrences of the disease and periodic treatment is often necessary.

We feed Life's Abundance. Here is the link to order hard food and canned food.
<https://lifesabundance.com/Home.aspx?realname=20091228&cat=0&hdr=&Ath=False&crt=0>



Click above to go to information and ordering!

Our premium cat food for all life stages contains select ingredients to help your cat achieve optimum health. We use a “fast-cook” process at low temperatures to help preserve the nutritional value of each and every wholesome ingredient. And we maintain strict inventory controls to ensure the quality and safety of our foods.

Our all life stage cat food is made with the finest ingredients, including ...

- A proprietary blend of vitamins & minerals
- High-quality protein from chicken & whitefish meals for strong muscles
 - An antioxidant system including vitamins C & E
 - Omega-3 fatty acids for healthy skin & a shiny coat
- Calcium & phosphorus for healthy teeth & strong bones
- Dietary fiber to help maintain a healthy digestive tract

Since we use only wholesome ingredients, this formula contains ...

- No artificial flavors
- No artificial colors
- No corn or corn gluten
- No wheat or wheat gluten

Life’s Abundance delivers concentrated nutrition in every bowl, with ...

- A balanced blend of calcium & phosphorous to support growing & aging bones
 - Optimal protein levels for growing kittens & adult cats
- Unique blend of antioxidants to support cats throughout their life cycle

Choose Life’s Abundance for your cat because the recipe for a better life is more than just meeting minimum requirements.



~ HOME HAZARDS TO AVOID:

dangling cords, ropes, strings and pulleys	Open toilet lids	inside recliners and sofa beds	sewing and crafts materials and supplies
electrical and phone cords	fireplaces	fringe or loose trim	Decorations with small pieces
stoves and ovens and all appliances, including refrigerators, washers and dryers! Check all appliances before turning on or closing doors!	accessible garbage containing plastic wraps, bones, rubber bands, Styrofoam, cigarettes, etc...	keep kitty teasers in drawers and put away after play!	Tools, nails, screws, wire, etc.



~ CHEMICALS & CLEANING SUPPLIES: PHENYL (Lysol) is deadly to cats, and so is Antifreeze! Remember: they lick their paws, too, so be careful what chemicals are used on floors and in toilets. Rinse and dry thoroughly, disinfected litter boxes!



~ POISONOUS PLANTS: The following plants are in some degree poisonous or hazardous to cats:

Aloe Vera	Caladium	Dcentra (Bleeding Heart)	Holly Hyacinth	Lily-of-the-Valley	Poinsettia	Sweet Pea
African Violet	Castor Bean	Dieffenbachia	Hydrangea	Mistletoe	Poinciana (bird of Paradise)	Thorn Apple
Anemone	Clematis	Easter Lily	Indian Splurge Tree	Morning Glory	Pokeweed	Tomato Vines
Azalea	Crocus	Elephant's Ear	Iris	Mountain Laurel	Primrose	Tulip

			Jack-in-the-Pulpit			
Baby's Breath	Cycads	Four O'clock	Jerusalem Cherry	Oleander	Rhododendron	Wisteria
Black Cherry	Daffodil	Foxglove	Jimson Weed	Philodendron	Rubber Plant	yew
Buttercup	Daphne (splurge laurel)	Hellebore	Lantana (Red Sage)	Poison Ivy	Solandra (Trumpet Flower)	
Bloodroot	Delphinium	Hemlock	Larkspur	Poison Oak	Star of Bethlehem (Snowdrop)	



Danger! ~ POISONOUS FOODS: Chocolate, Onions, raisins!

~ OTHER POISONS: Human Medications, Tylenol, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Household cleaners, Bath supplies, Toilets, Antifreeze, Paints/Paint thinners...

Keep the numbers of your local poison control center, your vet, and the emergency clinic posted by your phone.



~ SUPPLIES FOR YOUR COONPAL:

Litter box (covered is nice)/ some prefer uncovered	Tartar Control Cat Treats
Litter box scooper	Can of Goat's Milk or feline milk
Litter box liners	Scratching posts
Plastic bags for scooping out Litter box	Metal combs (9 & 12 teeth per inch)
Feline Pine Pellets or Scoopable litter & scooper	Blue Dawn Dishwashing

	Detergent (bath, & flea killer!)
Baby Wipes	Advantage Plus Monthly Flea Treatment
Paper Towels or antibacterial cleaning wipes	Cat carrier
Three china or metal dishes/bowls	Small Nail clippers for cats
IAMS or MAXXIMUM (Wal-Mart) hard kitten food	Assorted Toys
optional: Automatic Waterer & Feeder	

~ **ADJUSTING TIME:** Remember that this is your kitten's/cat's first extended time away from COONPALS, the only home ever known. The kitten may seem confused and insecure at first. TIME is needed to adjust to you, other family members and other pets... and to the new environment. Keep the kitten's introduction as stress-free and quiet as possible.

~ **LITTER BOX:** Show the kitten the litter box, food, and water as soon as you bring him/her home. IF accidents happen, never spank or yell at the kitten. Rather, pick up the kitten and put him/her in the litter box, and make digging motions with its front paws. Kittens are very clean animals, and don't want to be soiled or use a soiled box.

~ **NEW ENVIRONMENT:** Introduce the kitten to one room at a time, beginning with an initial place for the newcomer to stay. This should be your room, or an adjoining bathroom near you. This initial place should have a litter box, food and water and a towel or small blanket or cat bed for sleeping. Kittens are very inquisitive, so be prepared for things to be explored and knocked over. Limit the amount of 'things' the kitten can get into, especially items easily swallowed or dangerous items, like plastic bags and dangling cords or blind strings! After the kitten has settled into this first place, slowly allow exploration of additional rooms and areas. COONPAL KIDS are used to sleeping in the bed with humans!

~ **SOUNDS:** Try not to startle the kitten, as it is under stress making the adjustment to its new home. It is not unusual for a new kitten to hide, act skittish, or refuse to eat and/or use the litter box for the first few days. Provide lots of soft, reassuring speech and encouragement, and lots of petting. The kitten may cry or make other sounds, the first couple of days and nights. Although he/she is weaned, the other COONPALS KIDS aren't there, and he/she may miss mommy, littermates, and smells of COONPALS, while feeling scared and lonely. This will stop once it is comfortable making friends with you and other pets.

~ **OTHER PETS:** It is best to let the new kitten adjust to you and the new environment before introducing the other pets, one at a time. It may take several weeks to go through this patient process. Don't leave the new kitten and other pets ALONE together, until this bonding period is solid. A nice tip: WASH the new kitten in warm water and blue Dawn Dishwashing detergent about 24 hours after bringing him/her home. This kills any fleas and all pets will smell the same when you wash ALL the pets this way! Be sure to provide lots of extra attention to the established pets, or they may show jealous, territorial behaviors! A good guide is: a separate water and food bowl and litter box per pet.

~ **FOOD:** Your kitten is weaned, and has been freely eating a high quality hard food and drinking fresh water. COONPALS feeds wet & Hard Food, mixing 3 brands together at a time: Royal Canin Kitten, Blue Buffalo's Blue Spa, Taste of the Wild, Evo, Avoderm, California Natural, Life's Abundance Trilogy, Chicken Soup for Kittens, Indigo Moon, & Origen. Please introduce any new food slowly by mixing new with familiar for a time, before trying to abruptly switch brands. Switching quickly will cause tummy troubles, diarrhea and possible vomiting. Occasional tartar control hard treats are fine and good for the teeth. Occasional packets or cans of moist wet food is fine, but isn't recommended to be the majority of the

diet. Table scraps once in a while of meat or fish is fine, but shouldn't become a ritual at every human meal or cooking time. Mix a little canned pumpkin (Not the pie filling!) in the hard or canned food for constipation!

~ FOOD TEMPERATURE: Kittens should eat food at room temperature or slightly warmed. Don't feed food too hot or straight from the frig!

~ MILK: Cow's milk is hard for kittens/cats to digest and tend to cause diarrhea. Pet Stores carry various cat milk products. Diluted and warm goat's milk is used by COONPALS, and/or warmed KMR (Kitten Milk Replacement).

~ METAL or PORCELAIN BOWLS: We recommend metal or porcelain bowls and plates. A condition known as "Feline Acne" can occur from plastic dishes that harbor germs and cause small chin pimples that swell and are uncomfortable. If this develops, consult your Vet for treatment right away! Most of the automatic or gravity or free feeding feeders are plastic, and we use those- clean them well and often!

~ INDOORS ONLY! Potentially fatal feline diseases (Feline Leukemia Virus: FeLV, Feline Infectious Peritonitis: FIP, Feline Aids: FIV, Rabies & respiratory viruses) are passed from animals running freely outside and not immunized properly. Other environmental hazards make free roaming outdoors dangerous: vehicles, predators, poisons, wild animals-reptiles-bugs-birds, infected animals, cruel humans, etc.

~ COLLARS AND LEASHES: If you use a collar on your kitten, check it daily to be sure it isn't becoming too tight as the kitten grows. Conversely, a kitten can easily catch its lower jaw in a too-loose collar. A breakaway collar is the best choice, as it will separate if it becomes caught on something.

If you train your kitten to a leash, use a harness designed for cats -- never a collar (a cat will only struggle against the pull of a collar around its neck, but is more amenable to the behind-the-front-legs tug of a harness). Remember that harnesses are not totally secure, and a cat wearing a harness and leash should NEVER be left unsupervised. The cat may slip out of the harness, or strangle himself on the leash.

Never walk a leashed cat near a roadway or on a busy sidewalk unless you're sure the cat is *very* calm (cats that can be trusted not to panic in these situations are literally one-in-a-million!). The noise and motion of cars, people, other animals, etc., can cause a cat to panic, slip its harness, and dash into danger. The best place for your leashed cat is in your own quiet back yard with you.

~ GROOMING: Maine Coons present little grooming problems. Their coats are easy to maintain, and a weekly combing with a wide-toothed comb (about 9 teeth per inch) followed by a narrow-toothed comb (about 12 teeth per inch) is all that is generally necessary (use a flea comb on the face and ear furnishings). However, you will have to comb your cat more often in the spring and fall, which are seasons of heavy shedding. Pay particular attention to the areas behind and below the ears, the flanks, the britches, between the back legs, and under the front legs. These are the areas where mats most readily form.

If you wish to keep your cat looking like a champion, a bath once a month with a good pet shampoo, followed by blow-drying and a good combing is recommended. If the tail is extra oily (a particular problem with unaltered male cats), rub mechanics' hand cleaner (Goop or Go-Jo) into the dry tail and wash out with Dawn dishwashing liquid. Be sure to rinse all traces of soap out of the coat, and don't *ever* leave the cat unattended with hand-cleaner on its coat. Your kitten is accustomed to baths, so if you decide to do this, you shouldn't have too much trouble. If the kitten objects to the blow-dryer, place it in its carrier with the dryer propped up about 12 inches from the door. Leave the kitten in the carrier for about 15 minutes, then comb it out and allow it to air dry in a warm, draft-free room. *Keep the heat set on low whenever using a blow-dryer on a cat.* Keep Baby Wipes nearby for quick spills and accidents!

~ DECLAWING: Declawing is a mutilation of the cat's natural defenses. Your kitten has already started the training process at COONPALS to scratch on scratching posts and trees, not carpets or furniture, and the bi-monthly routine of having its claws trimmed. Additionally, a declawed cat is very likely to bite (because it doesn't have its claws for defense) and to refuse to use its litter box (because its mutilated toes hurt when it tries to dig).

Provide at least one, or better yet, several scratching posts for your kitten as soon as possible. Try to get the posts covered with a material of a different texture than your carpeting or upholstery, so the kitten doesn't get confused about which object is O.K. to scratch and which isn't. (A wooden post wound tightly with heavy sisal rope [they don't like nylon or plastic] makes an excellent scratching post.) Encourage and praise the baby when it uses the post; squirt it with a spray bottle of water and shame it when it uses something else (see 'Training' below).

~ TRAINING: Cats are trainable by proper methods: rewards and tangible but removed punishment (see 'Spray Bottle Method,' below). Be firm and patient with your kitten. By teaching it the house rules now, you can avoid future behavioral problems. Actions that are cute in a kitten may not seem so cute in an adult (such as nursing on your arm or sitting on the dining room table). If the kitten scratches its claws where it shouldn't, say "NO," take it to its scratching post, and make scratching motions with its feet. Kittens respond well to a firm voice and patience. They are naturally fastidious, and want to behave.

~THE SPRAY BOTTLE METHOD: Behavior problems that don't respond to a firm "NO!" can usually be modified by giving the kitten a quick shot of water from a spray bottle. This method removes you from the punishment in the kitten's mind, which is desirable for two reasons: The kitten doesn't begin to fear you as a source of punishment (as it would if you spank!), and it thinks the water is an 'Act of God,' and will refrain from the undesirable behavior even if you aren't around.

~ PLAY -- WHEN, HOW LONG, WHAT KIND? Kittens and adult Maine Coons like to play. Generally, the morning or early evening (following afternoon naps) is the best time if you want an enthusiastic response, especially in an adult cat. There are two types of play: Socialization (Interaction/Mating) and Object (Hunting). Discourage rough play, as this can make the kitten too aggressive. If the kitten kicks at your hand or bites at your fingers, say "NO," blow in its face gently, and remove your hand or toes. Kittens and cats have a natural instinct to play bite other cats' necks and wrestle- this is in preparation for later mating behavior- discourage older kittens and cats that are 'playing' too roughly with younger ones in this way! Soft toys with no small, easily removed and swallowed pieces are good toys; a twisted paper attached to a string tied to a stick is wonderful. With it you can go 'fishing for kittens,' and the pouncing and jumping it elicits is great exercise for the kitten. (If you use this type of toy, don't leave the kitten unattended with it; the kitten may well get dangerously tangled in the string.)

Remember that what your kitten needs most is your time and attention. Especially if it is left alone during the day, it will be very glad to see you in the evening, and demand quite a bit of attention. Please remember that kittens are sensitive, living creatures, and don't allow your friends, children, or other pets to mishandle this baby. One sure way to guarantee an unsatisfactory pet is to mistreat it, even inadvertently. On the other hand, plenty of attention, love, and considerate play will result in a companion who will give years of pleasure.

~ VACCINES: Some Veterinarians like 2 sets of FVRCP vaccines and others like 3 sets. If you choose to give the Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and/or Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) vaccines to your kitten, be aware that having had the FeLV and FIP series does NOT guarantee the kitten will be immune to FeLV and FIP; you must be just as careful about exposing the kitten to possible FeLV/FIP-positive cats as you would be if the shots had not been given. We do not recommend or give the FeLV or FIP vaccinations.

~ FLEA COLLARS: We do not use flea collars, first because their effectiveness is questionable and second, because flea collars can cause skin sores on long-haired cats, due to the concentration of poison

around the neck. Rather, a good flea powder or spray, available from your vet, is a better solution to the problem of fleas. If your kitten never goes outdoors, this problem probably won't arise. Monthly treatments of **ADVANTAGE** from your vet works great, and regular baths in blue Dawn Dishwashing Detergent kills fleas, too!

~What is feline herpes virus?

Feline herpes virus is an upper respiratory virus of cats. It is also known as rhinotracheitis virus. It is very common among cats, especially in environments where there are multiple cats or new cats are constantly interacting. **It is believed that 85% of all cats carry the virus in their systems.** The virus is spread through the air and replicates in the upper respiratory tract (nasal area, tonsils). The conjunctiva of the eye is also affected during the primary infection. Clinical signs of infection include sneezing and ocular and nasal discharge. In most cases the primary infection resolves with no residual ocular lesions. However, depending on the age when the cat is affected, the serotype of the virus (infectivity or strength of infection), and other factors, there may be various ocular signs. In very young cats, adhesions of the eyelids to each other or to the cornea may occur. Adult cats may experience recurrent conjunctivitis or corneal ulcers. The virus remains latent in the nerves that serve the eyes. When a cat is stressed or exposed to new serotypes (different strains) of herpes virus, the ocular disease can recur. There is some evidence that eosinophilic keratitis, plasmacytic-lymphocytic keratitis, corneal sequestrum, and some cases of anterior uveitis may be associated with feline herpes virus infection. **It is believed that regular amino acid, L-Lysine, added to wet food or dissolved in warm water bowls help with the virus. It can be purchased from Health Food or Vitamin stores or departments.**

How do cats get feline herpes virus?

Most cats are affected as kittens, contracting the infection from their mothers. Stray cats, multi-cat households, and cats from households where new cats are constantly introduced are more likely to suffer infection. Feline herpes virus is not contagious to dogs or to humans but only affects cats.

How is feline herpes virus diagnosed?

History and clinical signs can diagnose ocular diseases caused by feline herpes virus. Aside from history and clinical signs, diagnostic tests for feline herpes virus include virus isolation, immunofluorescent antibody testing, polymerase chain reaction testing, serology, and cytology. Testing can be expensive and is generally reserved for specific cases. Tests that may not specifically detect the presence of herpes may be used to detect ocular disease caused by herpes. These tests include a Schirmer tear test (measuring tear production), corneal staining, and conjunctival biopsy.

How is feline herpes virus treated?

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reproduce. Lysine has been demonstrated to decrease the severity of ocular symptoms associated with herpes virus infection (1) and reduce viral shedding during periods of disease recurrence (2). Depending on symptoms, other medications such as topical antiviral drugs, topical polysulfated glycosaminoglycans, topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or topical interferon may be used. In some cases the ocular diseases resulting from feline herpes virus may require surgical intervention. The key to managing the clinical signs associated with feline herpes virus is controlling the cat's environment. Cats exposed to multiple cats (indoor-outdoor cats), cats in multiple cat households, or cats that are frequently introduced to new cats are difficult to keep disease free. Reducing stress by maintaining a stable routine is helpful in preventing recurrences of disease. Keep in mind that it is the nature of the virus to see recurrences of the disease and periodic treatment is often necessary.

What Is Cat Scratch Disease?

It's rare that a human catches a cat's illness, but one that your kitty may pass on to you is cat scratch disease (CSD), a bacterial infection resulting from a scratch or bite. Signs of CSD range from swelling at the wound site to flu-like symptoms such as achy muscles, headache, fever, poor appetite, and swollen lymph nodes (typically in the neck, under the chin, or in the armpits). To lower your kitty's -- and your own -- risk of CSD, keep her indoors, banish fleas, and avoid rowdy play that could lead to a bite or scratch. If your skin is broken, wash the area well with soap and water, and call your doctor if you develop symptoms.