

Mittenstar Go-Home Guide

I put this together to help our kitten families to help you prepare for your kitten's arrival over the next week or two and outline what to do in the following weeks after bringing them home, and to give recommendations for safe products to use, clean with, and some to avoid! Each section is numbered for easy reference.

Topics covered:

1. Cleaning and Kitten-Proofing
 2. Vaccination and Vet Care
(You will need to give them 1 more vaccine as a kitten!!)
 3. Food, Litter, and Vitamins
 4. Product Recommendations
 5. Cleaning Safety and Cleaning Products
 6. Toxic Substances and Warnings
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1. Cleaning and Kitten-Proofing Your Home

(See Section 5 for the kitten-safe cleaning products we use.)

Before your kitten arrives, decide which room will be their safe space. This room should be fully kitten-proofed, and they should remain in this room for the first few weeks and be gradually introduced to the rest of the home as you bond and they gain confidence. I have a separate guide with more details on how to pick the best room, and how to introduce your kitten to the rest of your home, but for now, let's focus on cleaning and prepping!

1. Inspect the room at kitten level.

Get on your hands and knees and look for hazards—dangling cords, blinds, and items on low shelves should be secured or removed. Breakables and valuables that can be easily knocked over need to be moved. You can use zip ties and cord covers (easy to find on Amazon!) to organize and protect cords from curious kittens. Think like a kitten—anything chewable should be removed or moved out of reach. It's perfectly fine to have kitten in a room with office equipment, fans, etc, as long as any cords are properly covered.

2. Clear the floor.

Pick up any laundry, blankets, pillows, or clutter. Soft piles can encourage kittens to urinate on them. Even though our kittens are litter-trained and are used to sleeping with us in our room so they know our bed and laundry baskets aren't a potty-place, it's best to prevent temptation by keeping the floor clear.

3. Clean carpets and hard floors thoroughly.

Even if you clean regularly, a deep clean ensures there are no harmful residues.

- **Carpet:** Deep vacuum and steam clean with hot water only—**no chemicals, as kittens are highly sensitive to cleaning products.** Rugs that can be machine washed should be done with minimal soap and hot water. Large rugs should be steam cleaned (hot water only!) and dried in the sun.
 - **Hard Floors:** Mop with hot water and a tiny bit of blue Dawn dish soap (half a teaspoon per half-gallon), or use the recommended products in our guide (Chlorhexidine or Rescue Veterinary Disinfectant). The goal is to remove any chemicals or residue, along with any dirt. Hot water alone does a great job at this!
4. **Double-check for hazards.**
Go through the room one last time to ensure everything is safe. You should feel confident leaving your kitten in this space unsupervised.
 5. **Extend this process to your entire home** over the next few weeks so your kitten can safely explore as they get older.
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2. Vet Care and Vaccinations

If you don't already have a vet, begin searching now, especially one who supports breeder-adopted pets. When calling, ask if they're experienced with ethically bred animals, as some vets—particularly those with a rescue background—may be biased against breeders. Other vets (like the one we have!) support ethical breeders and may have purebred pets of their own! It's important to find a vet who respects your kitten's background and health needs.

Start reaching out to vet offices to book an appointment for your kitten's 3rd FVRCP vaccine (due between 16 and 20 weeks). Even if you already have a vet, contact them now to get your kitten's info on file, as some clinics are booked out weeks in advance.

Interview multiple vets if necessary. Let them know you're bringing home a baby Ragdoll from an ethical, health-testing breeder and need to set up a new patient visit and to have their third "FVRCP" booster. A welcoming and knowledgeable front desk is a great sign that you've found the right place.

While our contract states you have 72 hours to document any health concerns with a vet, **I do not require a 'first visit' unless there's an issue.** This helps limit unnecessary exposure to viruses or bacteria at the clinic (Sick animals go to the vet for care, so please do not let your cat down on the ground. They should only go on the disinfected exam table).

Focus on scheduling the final core vaccine and be prepared to follow up with adult boosters as your kitten grows.

Feline Vaccine Schedule:

- **3 FVRCP vaccines are done in total - spaced between 6 and 20 weeks old.**
(They had their first **2 vaccines while with us**; and will need **1 more with you** between 16 and 20 weeks of age)
- **Adult FVRCP booster** at 12–16 months.
- **1 FVRCP vaccine booster should be given every 3 years after this as adults.** (The AVMA no longer recommends yearly boosters for adult indoor cats due to injection site cancer risks, every 3 years has been shown to be just as effective as antibodies remain in their system for quite some time.)

Other Vaccinations:

- **Rabies: DO NOT GIVE THIS VACCINE BEFORE 6 MONTHS OF AGE.**
The Rabies Vaccine is mandatory in some states - however, it is not mandatory for cats in Michigan. If you need to booster with Rabies, or you would like to, please understand it does carry a higher risk of vaccine reaction (this has been peer-reviewed and proven) for cats.

Even in states where it is required, you can elect to wait until at least 6 months of age before giving this vaccine due to the known risk of side effects in felines.

- **FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus):**
Giving this vaccine to your cat will VOID OUR HEALTH CONTRACT.
The FeLV vaccine has been peer-reviewed and linked to serious issues, including immune suppression, disease, and death. **FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis), a deadly disease, has been associated with the FeLV virus, particularly with the modified live virus used in the FeLV vaccine. DO NOT GIVE THIS VACCINE.**
 - This vaccine is only necessary for feral cats or barn cats who live outdoors. **Indoor cats are not at risk**, as FeLV is transmitted through direct contact with an infected cat, usually via bites or saliva. There is no way for your cat to get this unless directly exposed to an infected cat!
 - *Important:* **If you have other cats that came from a shelter and were never tested, go outdoors unsupervised or may have been exposed to FeLV, make sure they are FeLV-free before introducing them to your Mittenstar kitten.** Stop allowing them to free-roam outside to prevent exposure. FeLV can take years before it causes illness symptoms. If you are not sure - please get them tested before any introductions, it is a very quick and easy test that can be done in-office with your vet. All of our adult cats are tested and negative for FeLV!
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3. Food, Litter, Vitamins, and Treats

Until your kitten is 6 months old, I firmly ask that you continue feeding the same brands we use to avoid stomach upset or sensitivities. When introducing new foods or treats, do so gradually by mixing them with the current food.

Current Foods:

- **Kibble:**
 - Purina One+ Healthy Kitten:
<https://www.chewy.com/purina-one-plus-healthy-kitten/dp/119347>
 - IAMS ProActive Health Kitten:
<https://www.chewy.com/iams-proactive-health-kitten-dry-cat/dp/121263>(I blend these two 50/50 to feed the kittens - if you want to just choose one, I'd recommend choosing the IAMS.)
- **Wet Food:** Fancy Feast Pate (all varieties are suitable). We rotate between the kitten varieties and the adult chicken, beef, and turkey flavors. Fancy Feast Pate is grain-free and doesn't use artificial colors or fillers, making it great for kittens with consistent digestion! Their favorites seem to be the chicken and turkey flavors!
<https://www.chewy.com/fancy-feast-kitten-tender-chicken/dp/176639>

Your kitten may develop a preference for specific flavors or types of food as they grow, which is perfectly fine. Kittens tend to have bigger appetites, which usually cut back as they mature.

Feeding Schedule:

- **Up to 6 months:** Feed $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cans of wet food per day, ideally in the evening. After eating, kittens will get sleepy, groom themselves, and be ready to cuddle. Provide kibble freely by offering a full bowl daily, and monitor their intake, but there's no need to limit it.
- **6 to 12 months:** They may eat a full can of wet food daily, or up to three or four cans if you switch to wet food exclusively. If your kitten prefers dry food and leaves the wet food behind, gradually limit the dry food to encourage wet food intake, which is better for their health.
- **12 months and older:** Their appetite may slow down as they finish growing. Expect them to eat $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dry kibble and 1–2 cans of wet food per day. Adjust portions based on your cat's needs, as this is just a general guideline.

At this stage, if they are overeating kibble, start limiting it to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup in the morning and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup in the evening, along with one can of wet food daily.

Ragdoll Weight and Activity: Ragdolls are a larger breed with strong muscles and a healthy layer of fat. To ensure they maintain a healthy weight, focus on their activity level. A healthy Ragdoll should be able to groom themselves, run, jump, and climb stairs easily. The typical adult Ragdoll weighs 12–15 pounds, though 8–18 pounds is within the acceptable range.

Probiotics and Vitamins (optional but helpful):

- **Purina Fortiflora:** Once a week, mixed into their wet food or sprinkled on dry.
- **Bene-Bac Probiotics:** The powder form is recommended, on dry or in wet is fine, 1–3 times a week, I love this one and use it regularly at all life stages!
- **B Strong by Revival Animal:** A vitamin blend I love and use here regularly. Add a small amount to their wet food 1–3 times a week as they grow, and continue into adulthood.
- **Taurine:** This essential amino acid is often lacking in commercial foods. Add a little taurine powder to their wet food or sprinkled on dry every few days. It's tasteless, and a small sprinkle is all that's needed for supplementation.

Note: There are many good vitamin blends available, but be cautious of vitamins like A and D, which can be toxic in high amounts. Generally, commercial foods are well-formulated and don't require extras, but adding B12 and taurine poses no risk, as excess amounts are naturally flushed from their system.

Optional:

- **Churu Treats:** Kittens love this paste, which comes in squeeze tubes. You can refrigerate half for later use to make them last longer.
 - **Boiled White Rice:** Occasionally, your kitten might have soft stool due to growth-related hormones. If there are no behavior changes, there's no need for concern. Boiling a small amount of white rice and mixing it with wet food can help firm up their stool. Only use as needed. **Do not use pumpkin puree**—it can upset their stomach.
 - **Treats:** When introducing new treats, start with small amounts to avoid stomach upset. Treats are excellent for bonding and training, but limit them to 3–5 per day to prevent digestive issues.
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Litter: We use a mix of pine pellets and Tidy Cats here, but either can be used on its own with success. Most kittens adapt quickly to new litter.

- **Pine Pellets:** Originally used for horses, pine pellets absorb urine well and minimize ammonia odors. Some cats dislike the hard pellets, so I soften them by adding a tablespoon of water to the litter, mixing it up to coat the pellets evenly, and letting it sit for five minutes.

- **Tidy Cats Unscented, Non-Clumping Litter:** This is safer for kittens, as clumping litter can cause health issues if ingested. I prefer the **Red Bag** non-clumping version. Once your kitten is over 6 months, you can transition to clumping litter if you choose.
 - **Crystal Litter:** I do not recommend crystal litter until your kitten is older than 6 months. It's toxic if ingested, and kittens tend to chew on things, including litter.
 - **Other Alternatives:** Newspaper, corn cob, and tofu litter are great options too.
 - **Litter Robots:** Do not use litter robots for kittens younger than 6 months. There have been cases of small cats and kittens being killed by these devices. If you want to use one, choose a USA-made brand that has been properly safety tested.
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4. Product Recommendations

- **Food:**

We use **Purina One Kitten** (dry kibble), **IAMS ProActive Health Kitten** (dry kibble), and **Fancy Feast Kitten Pate** (wet food). These are reliable, veterinary approved brands with quality, meat-first ingredients and low recall rates.

Other trusted brands include **Hill's Science Diet** and **IAMS** (particularly the IAMS Hairball Control, although we don't use it here, I've heard very good things about it! Some cats naturally pass hairballs, some cats need help with a specialized food).

I do not recommend Royal Canin or raw food, these are known for causing upset stomachs in Ragdolls.

*** Be cautious with 'boutique' brands that don't perform independent batch testing.**

Just because a product lists "meat first" doesn't guarantee it meets all nutritional needs for growing kittens, as processing can impact nutrient levels. Larger brands are often unfairly criticized for being "too industrial," but they have better quality control and guaranteed nutrient batch testing unlike most smaller brands. If switching to a different food, ensure they properly balance nutrients.

- **Plates:**

Get 3–5 small, ceramic plates with raised edges. Ceramic plates are better than bowls I've found, because cats don't like their whiskers touching the sides of bowls. Having a few plates just for kitty allows for rotation and easy wash/replace cycles.

- **Water Bowls:**

Have at least one wide-base, untipable stainless steel water bowl, fountain, or gravity waterer available.

- **Litter:**

We use **Tidy Cats non-clumping unscented** litter. You can transition to clumping litter after your kitten is 5 months old if you prefer. At 12 weeks, they're litter-trained but can still be clumsy, and non-clumping litter makes cleaning easier. It's also safer if

accidentally ingested.

For kittens, I recommend **1–2 litter boxes per household per cat**. Start with a box in their kitten-proofed space, and add another as they begin exploring the house. Place a large, machine-washable rug under each box for easy cleanup. Use a high-sided, uncovered box to prevent humidity and bacterial growth. Scoop daily!

- **Cat Hammock or Tree:**

If you don't already have some, you'll definitely want a few small cat hammocks and/or trees! Kittens love them, and you want to give them cat specific furniture that are made to be really tempting for them to climb and crawl on so they avoid your furniture you don't want them clawing. They are affordable (around \$20–\$30 on Amazon), and kittens love them! **Start with a smaller tree, and wait until they're 6 months or older before adding anything taller than 4 feet. Kittens can and will misjudge how high they can jump from, and I have heard multiple horror stories from other breeders of broken legs from kittens who went home and fell or jumped from a tree higher than they could handle.**

- **Brush:**

Choose a washable plastic brush with flexible bristles and an open back. I prefer human hairbrushes, as they tend to be softer and more comfortable for the cat. Brush your kitten daily to strengthen your bond.

- **Pet Shampoo:**

Kittens can get messy, so I recommend getting a gentle pet shampoo. Bathe them every 6–12 months as adults, and start bathing them every few weeks while they're young to get them used to it. There are lots of good options on Amazon and Chewy! Blue Dawn Dishsoap is wonderful for cleaning up a messy pet if they get something on their paws or bottom, but it can be a bit heavy for regular use. While most cats never learn to love bathing, many learn to handle it quite well and I recommend washing them every couple of months!

- **Nail Trimmers:**

Human nail clippers work well for cats, and there are also many simple pet specific nail trimmers available. There are great tutorials on YouTube for trimming nails, and with regular practice, your kitten will get used to it and sit still during trims. **Cat nails are very easy to see and trim compared to dog nails!**

- **Pet Beds, Blankets, Rugs, and Scratching Pads:**

Choose washable rugs, bath mats, and pet beds. These are great for your kitten, and washable options make cleaning easy. Our cats LOVE when I lay out small throws for them, almost more than they love overly plush beds. These are super easy to wash regularly as well! I also recommend specifically getting multiple cardboard 'scratch pads' that come in big multi packs - and all our cats and kittens LOVE scratching on these and will choose a cardboard scratching board over any piece of furniture - so put them around in multiple places to provide your kitten with safe places to flex their claws. You can find fun options on Amazon or Chewy for all of these things. Plus, the boxes they come in make great playthings! ;)

- **Furniture Protectors**

Consider investing in a few pet proof couch covers and chair covers if you have valuable

furniture! Many of these come in different styles and forms that make these things less appealing for kitten to put their claws on. Cats are very habit oriented, so using covers in combination with good cat scratching pads and cat trees will help set up healthy habits for your cats, and you can stop using the covers and protectors as your kitten gets older and less interested in 'trying out' new things.

5. Cleaning Safety and Recommended Products

This section provides a checklist and recommendations to help ensure your home is safe for your kitten. I've also included a list of cleaning products and substances that are toxic and should be avoided.

Trash Cans:

- Ensure all trash cans in your home have lids. Kittens are curious, and items like string, dental floss, or even cleaning products on paper towels can be harmful if ingested. Keeping trash out of reach is essential for their safety.

Cleaning Safety: Many cleaning products are toxic to cats. Always ask yourself if you'd feel safe licking the surface or inhaling the fumes after cleaning. If not, rinse the surface with water after using the product, especially on floors.

Avoid These Toxic Products:

- Fabuloso
- Lysol
- Pinesol
- Swiffer Wet Wipes / Wet Jet Solution
- Comet Bleach Powder
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner (especially with rust remover)

If you must use any of these products, be sure to wipe down surfaces with water afterward to remove any residue before allowing your pet back into the area.

Safe Cleaning Products:

1. Rescue Veterinary Disinfectant

This is a powerful, pet-safe disinfectant made from accelerated hydrogen peroxide. It kills viruses, fungi, bacteria, and parasites, making it perfect for deep cleaning and deodorizing. You can use it on all surfaces, including carpets and furniture.

- Purchase here: [Rescue Disinfectants](#) or on [Amazon](#).

It's an excellent alternative to toxic cleaning products like Swiffer solutions and works well for mopping, furniture, and hard-to-clean areas. Proper dilution is key to avoid excessive suds when mopping.

2. Chlorhexidine

This is an antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal cleaner, commonly used for both cleaning and pet care. **It's safe for your kitten's skin, but you must avoid contact with their eyes and ears.**

- Purchase here: [Chlorhexidine](#).

A diluted spray can be used to clean your kitten's paws, chin (for chin acne), and even tough spots like litter boxes. It's also a great addition to laundry to remove odors from bedding or pet gear.

3. Blue Dawn Dish Soap

A great all-purpose cleaner, this dish soap is a magical degreaser for floors, countertops, and pet items. It's safe for washing your kitten's bedding, towels, and even giving them a bath.

6. Toxic Substances and Plants

Certain substances and plants are incredibly harmful to kittens and should be avoided at all costs. Below is a list of items and plants to watch out for:

Medications:

- **Ibuprofen and other 'profen' medications:** These common household medicines are fatal to cats if ingested. Always handle medications carefully to avoid dropping pills.
- **Xylitol:** This common sweetener found in gum, candy, and toothpaste can cause severe reactions, including vomiting, lethargy, and liver failure. Keep any products containing xylitol out of reach.

Essential Oils:

- Never use **eucalyptus oil** around pets—it is highly toxic to cats and birds. Be cautious with diffusers, lotions, and candles that contain essential oils, as many can be dangerous.
For a helpful list of safe and unsafe oils for cats and dogs, check out this guide: [Pet-Safe Essential Oils](#).

Toxic Plants:

There are certain plants that can be completely deadly to cats this is not an exhaustive list so please look up any plants you have in the home, or before bringing home any new plants or flower arrangements!

- **Lilium (Lily) species / of any variety need to be avoided at all costs. Every part of the lily is deadly to them, even the pollen. All varieties are incredibly toxic to them.**

including Tiger, Asian, Japanese Show, Easter, Stargazer, Casa Blanca can cause kidney failure in cats. Very little need be ingested to cause severe kidney damage and potential death.

Additional dangerous plants are:

- Cannabis sativa, if eaten, can cause CNS depression, incoordination, vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, increased heart rate, seizures, coma, potentially death.
- Cycas revoluta - Sago palm. All parts are poisonous, particularly the seeds. Ingesting just one or two seeds can cause vomiting, diarrhea, depression, seizures, liver failure, potentially death.
- Tulip & Narcissus bulbs if eaten, can cause intense gastric distress, drooling, loss of appetite, CNS depression, convulsions, cardiac effects, potentially death if enough is ingested.
- Azalea/Rhododendrons all contain grayanotoxins which cause vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness, CNS depression and if enough is eaten, coma and death due to cardiovascular collapse.
- Nerium oleander is poisonous to all mammals, containing cardiac glycosides that can cause death if enough is ingested, or gastric distress, hypothermia, abnormal heart rhythm.
- Ricinus communis - Castor bean plant contains ricin which is extremely poisonous but found in the seeds. Though leaves also cause problems, eating leaves isn't usually fatal. Eating the seeds can easily be fatal, with severe abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, weakness, loss of appetite, potentially leading to dehydration, muscle twitching, tremors, seizures, coma and death.
- Cyclamen contains cyclamin with the roots having the most of the toxin and if eaten, causes serious gastric distress, intense vomiting and there have been some fatalities.
- Kalanchoe contains toxins that cause gastric distress, and can be quite toxic to the heart, affecting rhythm and heart rate. Not normally fatal but could be if enough is ingested.
- Yew of any species is toxic to all animals. Yew contains taxine, highly toxic and if ingested causes muscle tremors, seizures, respiratory distress, & cardiac failure resulting in death is very possible