

These are some of the things I recommend you do to get ready before your kitten comes home!

Before your kitten comes home, there are a few things you'll need to get ready, which we will cover in this document. Many of these you should begin preparing for now, that way you are all set to welcome kitten home, and so you can relax and enjoy their first weeks at home with you!

1. Lining up Vet Care and their next core vaccination
2. Cleaning and Kitten Proofing your home
3. Setting Up Kitten's Litter and Food
4. Product Recommendations

## 1 - Vet Care and Vaccinations

Vet Care: You will want to begin by finding a good vet in your area, if you do not have one already. If you do already have a vet, you will want to check with them, that they support breeder-adopted pets. Begin looking for a vet to make an appointment and reach out to them \*now\* so they have your information on record, and some vets may be booked out a little while, so make sure you are prepared.

Some vets are very pro-breeder, and love seeing ethically bred pets, and many have pets from breeders themselves! Some vets however, are staunchly against breeding of any kind as they have a 'rescue' mentality for cats especially. Some are also biased against breeders, and may indicate that 'all breeder kittens are unhealthy, or inbred'. This isn't true at all - but some veterinary schools are more biased in their teachings. Some veterinary courses support ethical breeding, some do not. So I strongly recommend talking with your veterinarian's office first!

If you do not currently have a vet, or if you talk with your vet and are concerned they may not properly support your ethically bred Ragdoll due to biases, you'll want to begin calling (or emailing!) veterinarians in your area! Google is a wonderful resource!

I recommend sitting down with a notepad (either the pen to the paper kind, or on your computer), and start making a list.

**Contact multiple vets, let them know you are interviewing for a new vet - you'll be bringing home a baby Ragdoll from an ethical, registered, health testing breeder within the next few weeks, and want to set up a new patient appointment, and the next vaccine for your kitten. The right veterinarian for you should have a polite and welcoming front desk, whoever you talk with should be warm, knowledgeable, and happy that you are proactively seeking out a vet to work with.**

In our contract, it states you have 72 hours after taking the kitten to document any issues with a veterinarian. I work extremely hard to make sure our kittens go home to you healthy, but things may arise. You do not have to take the kitten in unless there is an issue, I do not require a 'first

visit' - especially because at this young age, exposure to viruses and bacteria at a vet's office should only be done when absolutely needed.

**What you will need to book, however, is the 3rd and final 'core kitten vaccine' for your kitten. This can be done anytime between 16, and 20 weeks of age. If your kitten goes home to you at 12 weeks - this means you have two months to complete their final vaccine.**

**They will also need their adult vaccines later on.**

Vaccine Schedule:

- 3 FVRCP 'kitten' vaccines, spaced between 6 and 20 weeks old.
  - They will have had 2 vaccines while with us; and will need just 1 more while with you between 16 and 20 weeks of age.
- 1 FVRCP 'adult' vaccine booster, given any time from 12 - 16 months old.
  - Further vaccinations are not needed, because your cat should remain indoors.

Other Vaccinations:

There are a few optional vaccines you can discuss with your veterinarian.

- 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 required, you can elect to wait until at least 6 months of age before giving this vaccine.

- The FeLV Vaccine:

Giving this vaccine to your cat will VOID OUR HEALTH CONTRACT.

This vaccine HAS BEEN PEER REVIEWED AND LINKED TO DISEASE AND DEATH.

The deadly disease called 'FIP' has been linked to the FeLV virus, including the modified live virus they use in the FeLV vaccine. This vaccine is needed for feral cats, and barn cats who live outdoors. It is not required for cats who live indoors, and will never be exposed to the FeLV virus. FeLV can only be transmitted through direct contact with an infected cat, often spread through cat bites and saliva.

If you have other cats in the home who may have been exposed to FeLV by living or going outside unsupervised, please make sure they do not carry FeLV before introducing them to your Mittenstar kitten, and stop allowing them to free-roam outdoors.

## 2. Cleaning and Kitten Proofing Your Home

(In section 4, I go over kitten-safe cleaning products I use here at our home.)

Before kitten comes home, please decide on where kitten will be staying in your home.

You should have 1 room completely kitten proofed, where kitten can spend their time safely.

I have a separate guide on how to bring kitten home and adjust them to their kitten room, and then the rest of your home.

This section is just on how to clean.

1. Get down on your hands and knees, and look around the room.

Dangling cords, blinds, and items on bookcases or shelves at this height need to be secured, or moved. Breakable items, valuables, things that can be knocked over easily, should all be removed from this room. Cords can be zip tied together, taped down to the walls with white painting tape, or there are also 'kitten proof' cord covers you can find on Amazon.

Think like a kitten - anything chewable needs to be removed, or moved out of reach.

2. Anything on the floor needs to be cleared. Open laundry baskets, piles of clothing, soft pillows, blankets, any sort of clutter should be picked up and put away. Piles of things can encourage a kitten to urinate there, especially soft items. If in a bedroom, the bed itself is fine, but make sure to make the bed and smooth out the covers every day - crumpled up blankets can trigger a kitten to try and mark them.

Our kittens are raised in our room and around our bed and closed laundry baskets, and are litter trained, but those good litter habits need to be encouraged, and the best way to do so is to ensure the only 'box like' thing on the ground, is their litter box - and that there aren't any soft 'piles of things' to tempt them into peeing there.

3. Cleaning Carpet VS Hard Floors

Flooring **NEEDS TO BE CLEANED** before kitten comes home! Even if you regularly clean, a deep clean can help make sure there are no built up products on your floors that can be poisonous to kittens.

- Carpet: If you have carpeting down, or rugs, they need to be properly cleaned before kitten arrives. Homes can build up dust, dander, and allergens, even with regular vacuuming. I strongly recommend doing a deep vacuum, and then doing a steam cleaning with **HOT WATER ONLY**. Do **NOT** use any products during the steam cleaning, as these can cause coughing, sneezing, wheezing, and allergic reactions. The hot water will lift any old products out of the carpet, so they are clean and fresh for kittens.

Cats become less sensitive to these things as they grow up - but kittens can be extremely sensitive to cleaning products that get soaked into carpeting.

Any rugs that can be machine washed, do so with a limited amount of laundry soap, and hot water. Rugs that are too large to be machine washed, should be steam cleaned with hot water only, and set out in the sun to dry.

- Hard Floors: Any hard flooring should be mopped with **HOT WATER** and a small amount (a teaspoon per half gallon) of **BLUE DAWN DISH SOAP** ; or you may use the products we recommend in our product guide I sent separately (Chlorhexidine, or Rescue Veterinary Disinfectant.)

4. Go through the room once more, anything at all you can think of that a kitten could get into - chew - harm themselves with - make sure you remove or secure. You want to have a space where you can leave kitten unattended, and know that when you come back kitten will be safe and sound.

5. Over the coming weeks, you'll also want to extend this process to your entire home! That way, when kitten is ready to begin exploring your home, you can rest and enjoy the process knowing there isn't anything they can hurt themselves on.

### 3. Food, Litter, and Deworming

**Until kitten is 6 months old, I require you continue their food with the brands we use here so there is no risk of stomach upset or sensitivity with them.**

Foods:

- Kibble: Purina One Healthy Kitten Formula
- Wet Food: Fancy Feast Pate - All Pate varieties are fine. We rotate between the kitten varieties, and the chicken, beef, and turkey varieties. Fancy Feast Pate is grain free, and does not use artificial colors or fillers, I find it wonderful for kittens. Your kitten may develop a preference for one or two certain flavors as they age, and that is fine and normal!

Schedule:

- Until 6 months old, give  $\frac{1}{2}$  can of wet food per day. I recommend in the evening, an hour before bed. They will eat, get sleepy and have a bath, and then be ready to cuddle. Give as much kibble as they want, I recommend putting out a full cup of kibble every day, keep an eye on how much they eat.
- Six to Twelve Months: They can have a whole can of wet food per day, if they like it. Some cats prefer wet, some prefer dry. If your kitten is preferring to eat dry food, and leaving their wet behind, begin limiting how much dry food you leave out. A cat should eat wet food, as it will help keep them healthier than just dry.
- Twelve Months+ : Their appetite may slow down or reduce as they finish with their kitten growth spurts. They should be eating  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of dry kibble per day, and 1 can of wet food. If you are free-feeding their kibble, and they are eating too much, you want to begin limiting how much kibble you leave out.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup in the morning, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup in the evening, is the perfect amount for most adults, along with a can of wet food per day.

Probiotics (optional, but helpful):

- Purina Fortiflora: Not required daily, I recommend mixing it into wet food once a week.
- Bene-Bac Probiotics: The best version of this is the powder form, it can be given once a week.
- B Strong by Revival Animal: This is a Vitamin Blend we love here! The kittens are used to having a small amount mixed into their daily wet food, I recommend adding in just a little bit to their wet food 1 - 3 times a week as they grow, and as adults.

Optional:

- Churu Treats: A delicious paste that kittens love! It comes in a tube, that you squeeze, and the kittens lap it up like a popsicle. You can give half one day, put it in the fridge, and give the other half the next day.
- Boiled White Rice: A kitten may get soft, runny poos from time to time due to hormones as

they grow. As long as it's only occasional, and there are no behavioral changes in your kitten, there is no need for worry. Boil a half tablespoon of white rice with a cup of water for 10 minutes - drain the water off, and mix the rice in with their wet food just once or twice. This will help soak up any extra bile in their tummy, soothe them, and help firm up their poo. Only to be done as needed.

- Treats: When introducing a new treat to your kitten, give a small amount the first day, so you don't upset their tummy. There are many good treats out there for kittens, and they're great for bonding and training. Do not give more than 3 - 5 extra treats per day!

Litter:

I actually combine two types of litter for my own use here (Pine pellets and Tidy Cats)! But you can use these on their own with great success, most kittens are not picky and will use whatever litter you provide for them right away.

- Pine Pellets: This is a bedding you can get from Tractor Supply Company, it was originally used for horses, but works fantastic for cats! I find the pine really absorbs urine, and keeps the ammonia smell to a minimum. Many cats do not like the hard pellets though, so what I do, is mix a very small amount of water into the pellets, leave it to sit for 5 minutes, and that helps soften the pellets up. The cats love it!

- Tidy Cats Unscented, non-clumping litter: Here, I use the non-clumping tidy cats because it is safer ; if a cat or kitten eats clumping litter, it can impact their colon and kill them. If you can find the RED BAG non-clumping tidy cats, that is my favorite! I get mine up at my local Meijers, most pet stores will carry it to, its one of the most popular brands. Once a kitten is 6 months or older, you can move to a clumping litter if you prefer.

- I DO NOT RECOMMEND CRYSTAL LITTER until your kitten is older than 6 months. Crystal litter is highly toxic if ingested, and kittens will often taste their litter and chew on it. Wait until your kitten is older if you want to transition to crystals!

- Newspaper, corn cob, and tofu litter are all great alternatives too!

## 4. Product Recommendations

- **Purina One Kitten** (Dry Kibble) and **Fancy Feast kitten Pate** (Wet food, we rotate flavors) ; these are great brands of reliable food, with quality meat-first ingredients, and low incidences of recalls or digestive issues.

- 3 – 5 small, **ceramic (not plastic)** plates with raised edges for food ; 3 is enough to always have 1 in rotation if the others are being washed. Plates are actually best for cats because bowls will brush their whiskers, which they do not like!

- At least 1 wide base / untip-able **stainless steel** water bowl

- **Tidycats Litter – we currently use the non-clumping** unscented – they can be safely transitioned to clumping if you prefer, but I recommend waiting until they're over 5 months old. They're great at using the litter consistently by 12 weeks – but are clumsy and may step back

into their own messes occasionally, and the non-clumping makes cleaning them up way easier as it won't stick to them as badly. It's also safe for them if they accidentally ingest any of it!

- Minimum 1 - 2 litter boxes per household. Kitten should have their own litterbox in their kitten-proofed space – and then at **least** 1 more in another area of the house once they start gaining full access to the house. I recommend getting a very large, machine washable utility rug to put under each box for easy litter clean up. I recommend a high sided, uncovered box (covered boxes can cause humidity and increase bacterial and fungal overgrowth). Please scoop the box daily!
- A small 'cat hammock' or 'cat tree' if you don't already have one. They're usually only \$20 - 30 on amazon for a small one, and the kittens absolutely love them. Having a smaller one ready for their kitten space is very recommended! Larger trees can be added once they're older, I recommend waiting until they are 16 - 20 weeks before adding any trees taller than 4 feet high.
- A 'washable' brush, one that is plastic, has flexible bristles (not too hard or pokey) and has an open back is what I think works best! I honestly prefer human hair brushes to most pet brushes because they tend to be better made and less pokey / more enjoyable for the cat to be brushed with. Brush your kitten daily, and the bond between you will never break lol <3
- Gentle Pet shampoo - they can and will make messes and I recommend bathing them at least every 6 - 12 months as adults. Bathing them every few weeks as they grow up will help them be adjusted to getting baths and staying clean, too!
- Nail trimmers (human ones work well on cats! I recommend looking up videos on youtube for how to trim their nails, it's easier than you'd think and as long as you keep up on it they'll get used to it and sit still for their trimming time!)
- Pet Beds and Rugs: Washable rugs, bath mats, and pet beds are all great options for baby! I love making sure the options we have are washable to make cleaning them every few weeks nice and easy. There are lots of fun options on Amazon and Chewy!! As a bonus - they love playing in the boxes they come in too lol!