Caring for a Cat or Kitten

Taking care of a cat or kitten is a big job! Find out what supplies you will need and what responsibilities you will have to take to care for your new pet.

**Supplies Needed**
- Balanced, brand name food. Make sure it’s for the right age. Dry food is better for your pet’s teeth. Canned food is more similar to a natural diet for cats, so some of both is probably best.
- Food and water bowls. Ceramic and metal are best. Some pets are sensitive to plastic.
- Cat toys – make sure there aren’t any small parts or string that can fall off and be swallowed
- A cat brush
- Cat toothpaste and toothbrush
- “Breakaway” collar and ID tag
- Microchip both indoor and outdoor cats
- Scratching post or scratching pad
- Litter box – one per cat, plus one extra
- Litter – scoopable litter is best. Don’t use dusty or perfumed litter
- Cat carrier
- Cat nail clippers
- Optional: Cat condo and bed

**Dangers! Never Feed Your Cat/Kitten:**
- Alcoholic drinks
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Grapes and raisins
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Onions, garlic and chives
- Bones
- Tomato plants
- Unripe fruit
- Yeast dough
- Any houseplants –some are poisonous

**Feeding Your Cat/Kitten**
- Kittens (under 6 months): 3-4 times a day
- Over 6 months : Feed twice a day (amount depends on food type and how active your cat is)
- Training your cat to eat twice a day: When your kitten turns 6 months old, offer food to him/her twice a day only. Leave the food out for ½ hour only. Your cat will quickly learn to eat all of his/her food during the half hour.
- Avoid giving your pet too many treats since cats can become overweight as they age

*Happy, Healthy, and Home*
*www.starelief.org*
Caring for a **Cat or Kitten**

**Chores**

**Daily**
- Feed and water your cat
- Clean litter box
- Clean water/food bowls
- Play with your cat

**Weekly**
- Thoroughly clean the litter box using a mild soap and replace litter
- Brush teeth once

**Two Times a Week**
- Brush hair (gently)

**Monthly**
- Check to see if nails need to be trimmed

**Yearly**
- Have your parent or guardian take your cat to your veterinarian for a check-up

**Brushing Your Cat’s Teeth**
It is not easy, but cats are healthier if you brush their teeth. Use cat toothpaste and brush. Start when they are kittens, so they get used to it.

**Spaying and Neutering**
- Female cats should be spayed and male cats neutered by six months old. This reduces bad behavior and some diseases later in life.

**Finding the Right Veterinarian**
- When you get your pet, have your parent or guardian take it to a veterinarian for a check-up
- Your pet should see a veterinarian at least once a year and when you think it might be sick

**Training**
You can train your cat to use a scratching post by placing catnip around the base of the post and rewarding your pet when he/she uses the scratching post. Cats love to scratch!

---

**Happy, Healthy, and Home**
www.starelief.org