

Kitten care guidelines

Proper care and grooming of your kitten will ensure that you have a healthy pet that does not destroy your home! Here are some tips we have learned along the way.

Diet

- Kitties can have sensitive stomachs. A change in diet can mean a smelly box and even a nerve-racking trip to the veterinarian. We feed our cats only premium cat food such as Purina Pro-Plan, Nutro-Max, Royal Canin or Iams. Though you may choose to supplement the diet with wet food or even raw beef (ground defatted London Broil), kibble must be freely available at all times. Kibble diets are formulated to contain all of the essential vitamins, minerals and amino acids needed by cats.
- Your new baby should eat kitten food for the first year of life. This provides the extra calories and nutrition to grow up strong. At one year, switch to adult food preferably of the same brand. If your kitten does not seem to eat a lot of kibble or always seems to be hungry or begging, try a different brand; he may not like the first one you chose.
- Our two spoiled adults love canned cat food. However, this is an unnecessary and rather costly treat. Our kittens are on a kitten kibble diet and are all growing up to be big and strong.
- If your kitten has runny stool or diarrhea for more than a few days, please consult your veterinarian to be sure that your kitten does not have parasites.

Water

- Fresh water must be available at all times for your kitten. Bengals love water; don't be surprised to find them in your shower or kitchen sink.
- We provide our cats with a recirculating **water fountain** available at pet stores that has a fiber and charcoal filter to remove any lint. We feel this is the healthiest way for your kitten to stay hydrated. The flowing water keeps their attention and is occasionally cause for splashy play!

Veterinary care (see also our [Veterinary Care Page](#))

- When you take home your kitten you have **three days** to see your veterinarian for an examination of the general health of your kitten and one week to return the kitten (see contract)
- **Never allow your cat to be anesthetized with ketamine or another injected anesthesia.** Choose only a veterinarian who uses inhaled (gas) anesthesia (see our [Veterinary Care Page](#) for more details).
- Find a reputable veterinarian in your area with whom you feel comfortable. We can recommend veterinarians in the San Diego area. Remember that this is your pet, and **you have the control** over what treatment is provided. You should NEVER feel pressured to conduct expensive tests or have excessive vaccinations. If you feel uncomfortable at all, PLEASE seek another doctor. We will be happy to share our experiences with you.
- Your kitten requires three initial **vaccinations** for upper respiratory viruses, called FVRCP. Your kitten will receive vaccinations at 8, 12 and 16 weeks. You will be provided with health records and informed of the necessary follow-up vaccinations.

After these first three, our veterinarian recommends a booster at 1 year (also FVRCP) and then every three years after that. Your veterinarian can discuss recommendations for other vaccinations; Bengals are sensitive cats so it is best not to vaccinate for diseases they are unlikely to contract since they are indoor cats.

Grooming

- Proper grooming will ensure that your Bengal and your furniture get along. When you pick up your kitten, we will instruct you on how to clip their claws every one to two weeks. This is easy to do and painless for the cat; your cat will become used to it
- **You must not declaw the animal.** This is inhumane and will *definitely* alter the personality of your cat. It is traumatic and unnecessary. Provision of scratching posts and cat trees will ensure that your cat climbs in appropriate places. Bengals are part tree cat, and they will climb as high as they can! If you have a problem with scratching, please contact us
- Cats love to be **brushed**. Bengals shed very little compared to other breeds. However, brushing can prevent hairballs, promote digestive health and show off their stunning coats.
- **Tooth care.** Start early to keep your cat's gums and teeth healthy by brushing his teeth. There are a number of good products with finger brushes or small bristle brushes. This will hopefully prevent costly visits to the vet for dental cleaning. Most veterinarians also carry a chewable treat called CET, which is palatable and provides some enzymatic cleaning.

Litter

- We recommend a wood-pellet litter product. Many are available at horse/ animal feed stores for around \$5 per 20-30 pounds. This is very inexpensive and is the healthiest option for your kitten. Cats do clean their paws; use of a clumping or other stone-based litter can cause serious digestive problems. Wood litter is also biodegradable and provides excellent odor control. (More expensive pine versions are now available at all pet stores; in our experience these are less effective at odor and wetness control.)
- You should have 2 litter boxes per three cats in your home. Daily cleaning is essential. Bengals are very clean animals and do not like to get near a smelly litter box. You do not want your kitten to find a preferred spot to go other than the litter box.