

# *Downers Grove Animal Hospital & Bird Clinic, P.C.*

635 Ogden Avenue · Downers Grove, IL 60515 · (630)968-2812

www.DGAnimalHospital.com

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## **Congratulations! You got a new Kitten.**

By selecting a kitten as your pet, you have chosen an extremely clean pet that usually needs little housetraining. Your kitten is likely to require little care but provide excellent companionship. He will, however, demand that his love and loyalty be earned.

Cats must have regular meals, clean litter, grooming, and attention in the form of play. Your pet will be quite content to live his entire life indoors provided that you offer companionship.

Male or female, kittens and cats are affectionate, intelligent, and playful. However, unless you plan to breed your cat, neutering is recommended to keep males from spraying, and females from producing unwanted litters. Sterilization will also prevent a multitude of medical problems. Sterilization should be performed at 4-7 months of age.

Needed supplies for a new kitten include high quality food, bowl for water and food, a litter pan with litter and scoop, grooming tools, a pet carrier, and of course, toys.

Prepare your home for your cat before letting him loose. Be sure all doors and windows are closed to prevent escape. Place your pet's bed (crate) in a secluded area and the litter box in another secluded area. Take him out and let him explore the room where he is to stay. Kittens and cats will explore endlessly until they feel totally comfortable in their surroundings. When your pet becomes comfortable, he will likely start to groom himself.

Show your cat the litter box, and place him in it several times. It's rare for a kitten to reject the box. If this does happen, the litter box should be moved to another more secluded area. If the problem continues, it may be necessary to place several boxes around the home. Your cat will find one that suits his need for privacy within 24 hours. Remember, cats are extremely clean pets.

It is surprisingly easy for kittens and even dogs to adapt to each other- if they are gradually and gently introduced. You can expect most dogs and cats to coexist well, but they may not be the best of friends.

Unlike most pets, cats remain true to their "meat-eater" heritage, and have special food requirements. Cats cannot process vitamins directly from vegetables, so a cat must eat the meat of animals that can convert vegetable vitamins to a digestible form. That's why, in the wild, a cat must eat its prey's ENTIRE carcass to derive essential proteins, minerals, and vitamins. Taurine, for example, is an amino acid that is vital to eyesight. Non-meat eaters can make taurine in their body, but cats cannot. Therefore, they must eat foods that contain taurine. **We highly recommend High Quality Kitten Food for all kittens.** It can be fed free-choice. Only put out what your cat will probably eat in the one day period. We prefer to put fresh food out every day. Some canned food can be fed for the first couple of weeks if your cat is small or does not eat well.

**Water is extremely important.** Insufficient fluid intake can cause the urine to become too concentrated leading to urinary stone problems.

If your cat does not eat well within the first 36 hours in your home, it may be that he misses familiar surroundings. It may be necessary to force feed him to stimulate appetite. We also recommend feeding

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some strong smelling canned foods if appetite is an issue. **The major appetite stimulant for the cat is SMELL!!** Since dry foods do not have as strong a smell as canned foods, some cats are more reluctant to eat dry food.

**Make diet changes slowly.** Any abrupt change can cause digestive upsets resulting in vomiting and/or diarrhea.

**Milk is NOT necessary in the diet.**

**Allow your cat plenty of REST TIME.** Cats sleep about 22 hours each day. Adequate rest is necessary for optimum growth and development.

**Guard against your cat swallowing foreign objects.** Quite often, we must perform surgery to remove foreign objects from the stomach and intestinal tract. These objects include string, fishing line, marbles, needles, or just about any other small object you can think of.

By reducing stress and allowing your cat to feel comfortable on his own terms, you will enjoy many years of affection, love, and loyal companionship.