

Preparing For Your New Kitten

Before you take your new kitten home make sure that you have a vet you can trust and feel comfortable with. If not, ask around for referrals from your friends and relatives. Vets are very good in diagnosing illness and treatments, but sometimes breeders know more about raising kittens, especially the breed they work with daily.

Kitten Proof Your Home: Look over your house as if you were going to bring a toddler into your home. Please look around your home for sharp objects, pins, needles, and especially strings and rubber bands. Any kind of string is very dangerous to cats. Cats have little barbs on their tongues that point backwards, and help push everything down their throats. If they start to swallow string, they can't spit it out again. If they swallow enough of it, it can get tangled up in the cat's intestines and the cat may have to have surgery to remove it.

Feeding the Kitten: We feed all of our babies Purina One kitten food. Always use glass, stainless steel, or ceramic bowls to feed your new baby. Plastic is not easy to clean, and may cause chin acne. You can leave a bowl of dry food out and should always have a bowl of fresh water available. I would suggest if possible buying one of the kitten fountains they now have because they tend to drink more water with those. Cats are prone to urinary problems mainly because they do not tend to drink a lot of water so it is a great help in preventative care. Two times a day, we put out a dish of canned food. Start with just one or two tablespoons at first and increase it if the kitten seems to want more. Do not leave it out for more than a few hours. Kittens are like children and will eat more one day than the other, so don't worry if they are not as hungry one day because they will usually make up for it the next day. Also, kittens do seem to eat more just before they go through a growth spurt. If you decide to change to a different food please do so gradually. If you change suddenly they will get tummy upset and diarrhea. Start by adding a little of the new food at a time (mixed with their regular food) over a period of at least one week and preferably two weeks. Do not give your cat or kitten milk. It will cause stomach upset and diarrhea in cats.

Litterbox: Buy a large size box, your Ragdoll won't stay small for long. You don't want the kitten to be confused about the litter box, so use the same litter in his/her new home. We use both the clay clumping litter for the kittens and also the pine pellets. That way you can use either one that you would prefer and they will adapt to it. You can change to a different litter if you prefer, but for the first few weeks stay with what the kitten is used to. If you do decide to change to another kind please do so gradually and add a little at a time of your new litter to what the kitten is using now. If you want to take your kitten to bed with you at night, you will need another litterbox for your bedroom. They are like little children, and they may hold it as long as they can and you don't want any accidents. It is best to be on the safe side and have more than one litterbox. It is very important to keep the litter clean. Scoop the solids at least once a day, and change the box at least once a week. Many people choose to leave less litter in the box, and change it more often. Cats are very clean animals, and the most common reason for litter box mistakes is that the litter box is dirty.

Cat Carrier: You will need to buy a medium size carrier. You should not take your cat/kitten out of the house unless it is in the carrier. A scared kitten or cat can get away from ANYONE! The cat may be perfectly calm when you leave the house, but if a dog barks or a car should backfire, it could

startle the cat and the cat will panic. You should always leave the cat in the carrier while driving in the car. A cat can get under the pedals of the driver and cause an accident. The cat will be safer in the carrier. I also suggest putting the carrier in the room with the kitten when you first bring them home and leave the door open so they can go in and out as they please. This is a "safe place" for them and will help them to feel more secure.

Scratchers: All of the kittens are trained to use the cardboard box scratchers. They can be purchased at Wal-Mart or any pet shop. They also use what is called a Turboscratcher. They are round with a cardboard mat in the middle and a ball that goes in circles on the outside and they love to chase the ball around.

Toys: I think that the favorite things in the world for them are the toys on a stick. It can be a feather, mouse or anything else on the end of a string. They love to jump up and down trying to "catch it." They love the little mice that they can run around with in their mouths. Make sure that they don't chew anything off of them though because they could eat it and become sick so throw them away as soon as you see they are coming apart or tearing. Foil balls or paper crunched up can also be another kitty favorite. They just love chasing them around!

Grooming: Don't forget clippers for the nails and a grooming brush. I would get a brush for kittens and then a wide tooth comb also. They love to be brushed and play with you when you groom them. I always suggest that you take a big bed pillow for them to lay on your lap while they are younger to get them used to you and to bond with you. That is a great time to play with them on your lap and talk to them and brush them. It also helps them to become wonderful lap kitties too!

Bringing Kitty Home: For the first day or two it is better to confine your new kitten to one room of the house with his/her food and water bowl. Please make sure the litterbox is as far away from the food dish as possible. Put the kitten in the litterbox a few times, that way the kitten will learn where it is in the room. Make sure the kitten has its own blankey or towel and bed (they love cardboard boxes) I would also put a small blanket down or towel by your bed if the kitten is going to sleep with you at night. It is a big change for the kittens to leave their brothers, sisters, and Mom so be sure to give your new baby lots of attention and re-assurance. This will help them to feel safe and secure and know that they are in a loving home. After this initial period, let your kitten out to explore the rest of the house.

All of our babies are raised very lovingly and in an organized way for their health. Socialization with anyone other than our immediate family will only begin after their first vaccination is given. This is a health precaution that any responsible breeder will take to ensure that small kittens aren't exposed to viruses and such that their weaker immune systems cannot fight off.