

Congratulations!

So, you've adopted a rescued kitten. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers:

When do I bring my kitten in for vaccines and what are they for?

Your kitten requires two different vaccines. One is a "combo" or FVRCP vaccine that protects the kitten from two respiratory diseases and distemper, and the other protects against rabies. If your new cat tries to sneak outside occasionally, since ARFNets only adopts to indoor home,s or have a second cat that is indoor-outdoor, the Feline Leukemia Vaccine is also needed. Your kitten has also been tested for Feline Leukemia and a fecal sample has been tested for intestinal parasites. Here is a schedule of vaccinations. More than likely, your kitten has already received one or more of these.

Cat Vaccines			
	Vaccine	Date Due	Date Completed
6-8 weeks	Combo	_____	_____
3 months	Combo	_____	_____
4 months	Combo	_____	_____
	Rabies	_____	_____
1 year & 4 months	Combo	_____	_____
	Rabies	_____	_____
Yearly	Rabies	_____	_____
	Rabies	_____	_____
Every 3 rd Year	Combo	_____	_____
	Combo	_____	_____
	Combo	_____	_____
Feline Leukemia Test			
	Positive	Negative	Date
	_____	_____	_____
Fecal			
	Positive	Negative	Date
	_____	_____	_____

Should I have my cat declawed?

Arfnets does not condone the declawing of cats unless all other alternatives have been tried. Nail trimming is an easy way to protect your furniture from sharp claws. Ask your vet and they would be happy to demonstrate how easy this process is. Depending on the temperament of your cat this can take as little time as 2 minutes every 3-4 weeks. Scratching posts and pads around the house also deter cats from scratching personal belongings. If you do catch your cat scratching on something undesirable, simply pick up the cat and place it on its scratching post/pad. Spray bottles filled with water can also be used to stop your cat from scratching furniture but only from a distance so the cat doesn't associate you with the correction and after the cat has been taught about his scratching posts.

When will my male cat start "spraying?"

Any male cat that is adopted from ARFNets should already be neutered and spraying will not likely be a problem. Kittens will not start spraying until they have reached maturity. If cats are neutered before they reach maturity this greatly reduces the likelihood of them developing this habit.

Why should we spay/neuter our cats?

Besides the importance of population control and decreasing the number of homeless animals, spay/neutering can also be beneficial to your cat's health and your relationship with your cat. Many breast and testicular cancers can cause death to older cats. The process of "fixing" the animal removes this risk of an early and painful death. Female cats have menstrual cycles and go through "heat" which can be very messy and bothersome to many owners. A female in "heat" has extremely obnoxious behavior and the scent attracts male cats from blocks away. Male cats that are neutered will not "spray" if neutered before maturity and tend to be friendlier and less aggressive.

What if my cat doesn't like the kitten we have adopted?

Cats need time and space to adjust to new members of the household. Do not try to force them to get along because the adult cat could hurt the kitten.

One of the most effective ways for introducing the kitten into your household with other pets is by placing the kitten in a room by itself that is adjacent to rooms the other animals can access. The animals will begin to get used to each others presence through sniffs under the door. You can also exchange bedding between the kitten and the other pets. Periodically allow the new kitten the reign of the house while placing the other animals into the kitten's room. By introducing the animals first through scent this will hopefully make the first face to face introduction less intimidating.

After the kitten is introduced it may be tempting to play with the new addition instead of the other cats in the house. Remember though that in order to make your other cats more accepting of the new addition they need the same amount of attention if not more attention than before so they don't feel threatened.

How do I discipline my kitten?

The easiest way to discipline a kitten is with a spray bottle. Kittens do not like getting wet, and after a few times with the spray bottle the noise of spraying water is enough to tell the kitten “no.” This technique works very well when teaching cats where they can and cannot go, such as the kitchen counter.

What should I feed my kitten?

Many name brand companies such as Purina, Iams or Pedigree have “kitten chow” dry alternatives. This should be fed to the kitten until they reach one year. After that adult cat food can be started. Under no circumstances do we recommend buying non-name brand or “cheap” foods. These normally contain mostly corn and fat (neither of which are healthy for your cat) and lack important vitamins and minerals. These foods may be cheaper in the short run but the health problems that can potentially develop after years of feeding will quickly surpass any amount of money you may have “saved.”

How many litter boxes should I keep?

The golden rule is to have one more litter box than you have cats. If the litter box is scooped more than once a day it is less vital to have an additional litter box.

When you first bring your new kitten home you should plan on purchasing additional litter boxes that can be easily accessed. Kittens are often like toddlers and begin playing so hard they forget to take a break to go potty. If the litter box is across the house when they realize they need to go this could result in an accident. The kitten will also need its own litter box until it is fully accepted by the other cats in the house.

What if my kitten gets fleas?

Be sure to take your kitten to the vet for flea treatment! Many flea-treatments that you can buy at pet stores or Wal-Mart can be toxic to kittens. *Hartz* flea treatment currently has a class action lawsuit against them because using this treatment has caused immediate death to full grown cats. Flea treatment from the vet may be more expensive, but not by much and it is not worth endangering your kitten. Medications from the vet such as Advantage or Frontline are not only safer but much more effective than over the counter products. In addition to the topical flea treatments that are applied once a month there is also a pill available called Capstar that will kill all of the fleas present on the cat or kitten for 24 hours. This pill is also very safe and can be given daily if needed to stop a major infestation.