

# Cats and Kittens

Cats have an average lifespan of 15-20 years.

Follow this guide to make sure your feline friend can purr through life.

## Food

Cats should be fed cat food. Dry food is better for their teeth, but wet food is tasty as a treat. Kittens need to be fed kitten food until they stop growing and reach adult size (around six months old). After that age, they can be fed adult cat food. Talk to your veterinarian about giving raw chicken wing once a week. This will help keep your cat's teeth and gums healthy.

A kitten or cat should never eat:

- ✗ Avocados
- ✗ Chocolate
- ✗ Cooked bones (raw, meaty bones are okay!)
- ✗ Grapes
- ✗ Onions

*These foods make them very sick and could be deadly.*

## Water

Always make sure cats have access to fresh, clean water.

Cats can only drink special kitten or cat milk from pet supply stores or supermarkets – cow's milk can make them sick!

## Shelter

It's best to keep cats safe on your property, entertaining and exercising them with toys, scratching posts and access to outdoor enclosures.

If cats are let outside, they must be supervised at all times and brought indoors at night. This is to stop them hunting our native wildlife and avoid being run over by cars!

## Grooming

Even though cats lick their fur to groom themselves, they should still be brushed every day. This is especially important for long-haired cats, and this way they won't get as many fur balls!

## Hygiene

Cats are very clean animals so they need to be provided with a litter tray and kitty litter for their toileting. Make sure each cat has their own litter tray and the kitty litter is changed every day.



## Health

Kittens and cats can't take themselves to the veterinarian so there are a few things to do to keep them healthy!

- Cats need a health check and vaccinations every year.
- Kittens need a series of important vaccinations to protect them from dangerous viruses.
- Fleas make animals very itchy and worms can be deadly. So, it's important to protect your cat by using a cat treatment from the local veterinarian, which is normally a dose of liquid that is squeezed onto the cat's neck every month.
- When a cat or kitten is quieter than normal, eating or drinking differently or their poo or wee is different, they should be taken to a veterinarian to be checked out!

## Enrichment

Cats should have toys that will make them use their brain and give them exercise. Balls with bells, scratching posts and table water fountains are fascinating to cats and can keep them entertained.

## Desexing

It is very important that pet cats and kittens are desexed! Desexed animals can no longer have babies, which is good for our community because we have too many unwanted animals. Desexed cats and kittens are less vulnerable to illness, better behaved and can live longer than non-desexed animals.

## Identification

All cats and kittens need to have a microchip implanted by a veterinarian. The microchip number links the pet to the owner's important details on a register, which should always be updated. If the cat is lost, the finder can have them scanned at the pound, RSPCA shelter or veterinary clinic. If the microchip is registered, the owner can be easily found. Cats can also wear a quick-release collar with an ID tag that has the owner's telephone number on it.

If you can't find the right cat for you at your local RSPCA shelter, other animal rescue groups or at [adoptapet.com.au](http://adoptapet.com.au), check out our Smart Kitten and Cat Buyer's Guide to help you find a good breeder.

For more information about cats and kittens, visit [kb.rspca.org.au/34/](http://kb.rspca.org.au/34/).