

## When You Take Your New Cat/Kitten Home

We know that you're excited about taking your new cat/kitten home. In that excitement, you may not remember all that we talk about to make your cat/kitten's adjustment as smooth as possible for him/her and for you. We have prepared this summary to help you after getting home with your new "baby".

**FOOD:** You can avoid tummy upsets by continuing to feed your kitten as he/she has been fed here—making changes gradually. Free feed a mixture of the food that we pack in his/her bag. Choose any of these high quality foods and gradually mix it in over a period of two weeks until your kitten is completely switched to the food of your choice or withhold all food for 24 hours, and then start with the new food.

The foods I recommend are: Royal Canin, Kirkland Chicken & Brown Rice, and Iams. While I've preferred organic pet foods without preservatives in the past, I am finding that many of the current brands have so many "people" health foods on the ingredient label. The issue we see from these ingredients is that they cause too much fiber in the diet and that causes mushy to soft stools. If you shop for other foods, please learn to read labels. Look for foods that contain no by-products. Proteins contained in meat by-products can be counted in the percentage of protein content on the bag. However, by-products can include: chicken beaks, feathers, feet, heads, and blood soaked shavings which are not digestible proteins!

Also, beware that too many peas, carrots, blueberries, cranberries, etc. can equate to too much fiber in the diet which leads to loose stools. So, be careful when selecting natural foods.

The foods with by-products are less expensive, but your cat will also be getting less nutrition. Ground corn is not digestible by cats either. Please avoid inferior grocery store brands, Science Diet (unless veterinary recommended for a health condition), and other foods that have been frequently found on the contaminated pet food lists. Occasionally, your kitten has enjoyed a treat of shaved human grade meat and human grade cheese. Your kitten has also been fed treats of human grade freeze dried chicken and greenies. [Petfooddirect.com](http://Petfooddirect.com) offers many treats at a great price.

**I suggest you avoid canned foods with a fish flavor.** Their strong odor and taste can "hook" your cat to the point where he/she will no longer choose more nutritious foods which are not artificially flavored or colored. Onion and onion powder have been found to be harmful to cats. Read labels and avoid foods containing onion powder.

Additionally, pro-biotics can be very beneficial for your cat. We have been feeding your cat Forti-Flora™ (the Purina brand) once a week in some wet cat food as a treat in order to help keep a proper balance in your cat/kitten's intestinal system.

**WATER:** When you first bring your kitten home, we ask that you mix your own water with bottled water to make the change gradually to your water supply. This also helps

avoid tummy upsets. Most of our cats like to drink from pet water fountain—which aerate and circulate the water.

**LITTER:** Cats will ingest chemicals in perfumed litters when cleaning their feet. In order to avoid that, Kittablu uses pine pelleted litter exclusively. Pine pelleted litter is available at most pet store and Tractor Supply Company (we buy the Equine Fresh brand). Also, we recommend periodically completely emptying and washing out your litter box with a bleach/water mixture. Then, replacing all of the litter with fresh litter. How frequently this is recommended depends on how many cats you have. With a single or dual cat household, it's not needed as often as it is in a cattery where we do weekly cleanings of the shared litter boxes.

**SCRATCHING:** It is natural for a cat to scratch in order to remove debris from his/her claws and mark his/her territory. Your kitten has been raised with “cat trees” and other cat furniture and toys made specifically for cats. Cats with access to “cat trees” and other cat furniture will not often sleep on people furniture unless their favorite human is next to them. When choosing a cat tree, make sure that it has a heavy, steady base that won't wobble when the cat jumps on it. Each cat has his/her own preference in types of scratching surfaces. I offer my cats sisal rope, corrugated cardboard, natural tree trunks, and carpeted cat trees. Also, you can entice your cat to use new cat furniture by putting a little fresh cat nip on it. If your cat stubbornly scratches where you don't want him/her to, there are several ways to deter that behavior. Please feel free to contact me for suggestions.

**GROOMING:** Birmans require minimal grooming, but you may consider grooming as a time to bond with your cat. Running a Teflon coated metal comb or metal pin brush over your cat once or twice a week will pick up most loose hair. Daily grooming is great if you and your cat enjoy time together!

Purebred cats are prone to gingivitis, so it is preferable that you clean your cat's teeth daily or provide a few drops of Oxyfresh™ in their drinking water on a regular basis. Oxyfresh™ also makes a pet gel that you can rub on their teeth or put in their water. Also, your vet may have other recommendations.

Should you have any issues with “cling on's” or messy rear ends, we recommend putting baby powder on the affected area, letting it soak up the moisture, and then combing the mess out. The baby powder will absorb any wetness and make it easy to comb out. This can be less stressful for both you and your cat/kitten than a bath.

Bathing is not necessary, but acceptable on occasion—even recommended on a quarterly basis. When bathing a Birman, it is necessary to use a “degreasing” product as the first step in the bath. Among the common products that can be used with pets (versus show cats) are: Dawn dishwashing liquid or Goop Hand Cleanser melted and mixed with Suave Clarifying Shampoo. Then, use a pet shampoo (preferably a whitening shampoo) and do a final rinse (water of bucket with small amount of cream rinse in bucket) with cream rinse. After each step, rinse thoroughly and rinse some more.

Claws should be clipped every three to four weeks.

**THE FIRST FEW DAYS:** It is best to have one room of the house set up for your new kitten as his/her “base”. There you will have the litter box, food, water, and a cat bed or towel. Be sure the kitten knows where his/her items are. It is recommended that you keep the kitten in a small area while it adjusts to your home. Some kittens take a week or so to adjust. Other kittens adjust to new surroundings almost instantly. If the kitten hides under something, he/she is just scared. I know it’s hard, but let them come out on their own. If you rush the kitten or try to pull them out before they are ready to come out on their own, it will damage your relationship with that kitten going forward. A teaser toy is a good way to try to get them out. Curiosity will kill that kitten and he/she will come out and seek you out.

**INTRODUCTIONS TO OTHER CATS IN THE HOUSEHOLD:** Introductions of your new cat/kitten into the others in your household may take up to three weeks time. During the transition phase, it is best to place your new cat/kitten in a secure place (like your bedroom or a guest bedroom that you are willing to spend a lot of time in—even sleep in). They should have their own food and litter box. As curious creatures, your new cat/kitten will eventually want to play “pawsey” under the door with the other cats in your household. Once all cats are accepting of this game, you may crack the door to your new cat/kitten’s secure area. With the door cracked, the cats can greet each other and feel safe of having some escape. Eventually, the new cat/kitten will “sneak” out to explore the rest of the house and the established cat/kitten will “sneak” into the new cat/kitten’s room and check that out. Finally, the door can be wide open and everyone is getting along well.

*Remember though: this adjustment phase can take up to three weeks. It could go much faster. But, it is best to expect it to go on for a long time and be pleasantly surprised when it doesn’t take that long than to put the cat/kitten on your agenda. If a new cat/kitten is rushed into a household, they typically have either litter box problems or unresolvable issues with the other animals in the house.*

**MEDICAL CONCERNS:** In the rare event that your Birman would need a blood transfusion, your cat’s blood should be typed. Although most cats have Type A blood, a few Birmans are known to carry Type B blood. Most veterinarians can do a blood sample blood typing or you can check out the University of California Davis Feline Genetic Testing site on line regarding their cheek swab alternative (which is often less expensive than blood typing at a vet’s office).

Additionally, flea medications, house plants, and some cleaning chemicals can cause neurological reactions in your kitten. Please make sure that you utilize all with caution and keep your kitten/cat away from house plants and cleaning chemicals until they dry.

Remember that your cat has been raised in multi-cat environment and is used to a lot of companionship and “body warmth” from the other cats. Please be ready to give your kitten the stimulation and same comfort he/she was raised with here.

When you take pictures, please feel free to send some along to me! I’ll love to see how my “babies” turn out—it also helps me in planning future litters! It’s fun to see whom in the family each cat resembles!

Most importantly, thank you for giving my “baby” a happy, loving home!