

Rumplteeza Kitten Care Notes

Adapted from an article by Trish Simpson

Care, Health and Safety

These guidelines are provided to help you care for your new kitten. These hints, plus tender, loving care, will help you keep your kitten healthy, playful, and affectionate.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE NUMBER ONE!!!:

I Kyra Lyn Foster require all new families of Rumplteeza Kittens to send me regular news and photos of their kittens... Seriously I do love each and every baby I breed and don't want to nag but would really appreciate it. Thank you.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE NUMBER TWO!!!:

Sometimes life's circumstances change and for whatever reason you may no longer be able to keep your kitten. I do require that the cat be returned to me so I can find it a new home. If you already have a new home in mind I need to be informed fully so I can contact the new family if required (If for example a relative of this cat develops a genetic disease). It is also important that the Cat's microchip details are updated if and when required.

So on to the fun stuff....

ACCLIMATISATION TIME

Please remember that this is your kitten's first time away from the only home it has ever known, and it will probably be insecure and confused at first. Give the baby time, and don't expect it to be best friends with you right away. Keep the kitten's introduction to other family members and pets as quiet and stress-free as possible and, most of all, give it time to become used to the new surroundings.

Have a quiet room (the Nursery!) prepared for your new baby. Show the kitten its litter box, food, and water as soon as you get it home, and then be prepared for accidents! If it misses its litter box pick it up, put it in its box, and make digging motions with its front paws. Young kittens sometimes forget where their boxes are, or suddenly realize that they have to go **now** -- this is normal, and will pass quickly.

Introduce the kitten to one room at a time; offer encouragement and petting, but allow it to explore in its own time. After it is comfortable and settled down in the first room, allow it to proceed to others. Try not to startle the kitten, and again, remember that this is a stressful time, which brings us to: **Stress:** Your kitten has had 2 of its series of

3 kitten vaccinations and is in good health. However, it is not unusual for a new kitten to hide, be skittish, or refuse to eat for a couple of days. Give lots of petting, soft speech, and encouragement, and you'll find that the kitten will quickly adjust.

Be aware that the kitten will probably cry a lot the first couple of nights. Although it is completely weaned, it is used to being around lots of other cats, and the baby misses mom, litter mates, the smells of 'home,' and is scared and lonely. As soon as it makes friends with you and your other pet(s), this crying will stop.

OTHER PETS:

If you have other pets, wait until the kitten is settled and comfortable before attempting introductions. Do not leave the kitten alone with the other pet(s) until you are certain that they are good friends (this may be several weeks!).

My Rumpleeza method of introducing a new kitten to fellow furry residents is simple and I've rarely had any problems..

Step 1. While the new kitten is still having its isolation period begin "House Tours" Carry the baby securely in your arms and show it around your home, talking reassuringly to it the whole time. Allow your other pets and the kitten to see each other but from a distance.

Step 2. As you continue this method over a couple of days allow the pets to be closer and perhaps sniff at each other – not too close though as bub is still in isolation!

Step 3. When the isolation period is over and the kitten and other pets are used to seeing each other pop bub on the floor near the other pets (one at a time if you have more than one), then supervise very closely to make sure than nothing goes beyond a hiss and a growl.

One good trick I have heard of but never used as yet is to give all pets (including the new arrival) a bath about 24 hours after bringing the kitten home. This way everyone smells the same, and will frequently accept each other immediately after. Be certain to give the 'old' pets lots of attention, in order to keep them from being jealous and to avoid stirring territorial instincts too strongly. It is always possible that the original pet may not take too kindly to someone new using its litter box/food dish. Be prepared for this by giving the new kitten its own litter box and food and water dishes.

FOOD -- WHAT KIND, HOW MUCH, HOW OFTEN?

Your kitten is completely weaned, and has been eating a variety of wet foods 4 times a day. This can be gradually brought down to 3 meals and then a morning and night meal.

My kittens are brought up on a modified diet of what my Adults eat.

They share in a mix of Preservative Free Pet Mince and Tinned Whiskers. (The Mince varieties, Chicken, Beef or the Lamb, Turkey and Vegetable) To these I add some premium Wet Kitten Food such as Advance Kitten trays or the IAMS Kitten Sachets. These can be purchased from any good Pet Supply store such as Petstock, PetBarn etc. Vets also often stock this food. You can also buy the human grade Macro Roo Mince in Coles and Safeway. I prefer to stay away from any Pet grade Minces that have Preservative 220 in them, which is known to destroy Thiamine. Fed solely on this will cause serious health issues. However if in a hurry or caught short it can do no harm occasionally. If you leave your kitten during the day for work then just provide a little extra wet food than your kitten needs for one meal but be sure to throw leftovers out when you return home.

The get the fresh meat mix for Morning and Evening and for lunch and supper they get just the Wet Kitten food.

The most important thing is their Dry Food. I always say that if cats are fed a premium Dry food then their Wet Food is not too much of a worry. The kittens have been eating Royal Canin Kitten 36. My adult cats eat Royal Canin Maine Coon Food. I keep the Dry food down all day and night so they can graze. Please introduce the kitten to any new foods gradually to avoid upsetting its stomach. New foods should be mixed with the food the kitten is currently eating, gradually adding more of the new food and less of the old until the kitten is eating the new food exclusively.

Contrary to popular belief, cow's milk often isn't good for cats, as most can't digest it properly, and consequently get diarrhoea.

I recommend metal or china dishes. Plastic dishes can harbour germs in the surface, which can cause a condition known as feline acne. Feline acne is small pimples on the chin, which cause swelling and discomfort, and can be very difficult to clear up. If this problem arises, consult your vet for the best method of treatment.

Of course, plenty of fresh water is essential. Maine Coons adore water and will play with it given the opportunity. They often "dig" at their water so placing their Water bowl somewhere where the inevitable puddles won't cause a problem is a good idea. Get used to the idea that running taps are a source of constant fascination...!

CARE -- DO'S AND DON'TS

Because such potentially fatal feline diseases as Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV), Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP), Feline Aids (FIV) (no, it's not contagious to humans), and respiratory viruses are common - not to mention automobiles, predators, cruel humans, and other hazards – I **STRONGLY** recommend that you not allow your kitten to run freely outside. This would also violate the terms of our Adoption agreement. Surveys have found that outside cats have high risks of

not surviving their first year. For cats kept inside, or allowed access to a secure outdoor enclosure, or taken out on a leash (as described below) life expectancy is 12 years or more.

SAFETY:

Before you let your new kitten loose in your home, check for the following safety hazards:

- Electrical and phone cords left dangling
- Toilet lids left up (a kitten can easily drown in a toilet bowl)
- Open firescreens
- Open stairways
- Reclining chairs and sofa beds (the mechanism of these can easily crush a kitten who has crawled inside)
- Fringe or any loose trim (kittens have been known to strangle when their heads get twisted in the fringe or in a hole between trim and fabric.)
- Dangling drapery cords (another invitation to strangulation)
- Accessible garbage (especially any kind of bones -- bones can either splinter and perforate the stomach or intestines, or form an intestinal blockage)
- Needles and/or thread; knitting and/or crocheting materials
- Rubber bands (which can wrap around the intestines)
- Plastic wrap (the kitten can eat it, strangle on it, or suffocate in it)
- Plastic bags (a kitten can become trapped and suffocate, or get its head tangled in the loop and panic)
- Styrofoam (especially packing "peanuts") which the kitten may eat
- Cigarettes (yes, they'll eat them)
- Yarn toys (if they come unraveled, they can wrap around the intestines or block them)
- Toys with easily removed and swallowed parts
- Cellophane (it turns glassy in the stomach and can cause internal lacerations)
- Christmas tree needles, tinsel, and decorations
- Open refrigerators, dishwashers, microwaves, ovens, washers, dryers -- always check for kittens before shutting or turning on any appliance!
- Put away feathers and toys attached to string (such as kitty teasers) after use. Kittens and cats will often eat feathers and swallow string.
- Keep your workshop off limits. Cats will jump at moving objects such as drills and power saws. They may also swallow screws, nails, wire, and other small parts.
- Kittens like to taste about everything. Keep all cleaning products and other chemicals stored away and out of reach. Anything with phenyl (check the label) is deadly to cats (this includes Lysol).
- Cats love to drink out of toilet bowls, so it's wise not to use anything in your toilet. Would be a good idea to ensure the lid is always down...The best disinfectant to use is one part bleach to 30 parts water, or F10 Veterinary disinfectant diluted according to

instructions. Remember, kittens lick their paws, so be careful what you use on your floors and counters.

- Keep the number of your vet, and the emergency clinic posted by your phone.
- **Poisonous Plants:** The following plants are in some degree poisonous or hazardous to cats:
Anything from the Lily family, Anemone, black cherry, bloodroot, buttercup, caladium, castor bean, clematis, crocus, cycads, daphne (splurge laurel), delphinium, dicentra (bleeding heart), dieffenbachia, elephant's ear, english ivy, foxglove, four o'clock, hellebore, hemlock, holly, hyacinth, hydrangea, indian splurge tree, jack-in-the-pulpit, jerusalem cherry, jimson weed, lantana (red sage), larkspur, lily-of-the-valley, mistletoe, morning glory, mountain laurel, oleander, philodendron, poinsettia*, poinciana (bird of paradise), poison ivy, poison oak, pokeweed, rhododendron, solandra (trumpet flower), star of bethlehem (snowdrop), sweet pea, thornapple, wisteria, and yew. * Some experts have removed poinsettia from the list of harmful plants.

Collars and Leashes:

If you use a collar on your kitten, check it daily to be sure it isn't becoming too tight as the kitten grows. Conversely, a kitten can easily catch its lower jaw in a too-loose collar. However as your kitten is an indoor cat it is much better for no collar to be used.

If you train your kitten to a leash, use a harness designed for cats -- never a collar (a cat will only struggle against the pull of a collar around its neck, but is more amenable to the behind-the-front-legs tug of a harness). Remember that harnesses are not totally secure, and a cat wearing a harness and leash should NEVER be left unsupervised. The cat may slip out of the harness, or strangle himself on the leash.

Never walk a leashed cat near a roadway or on a busy sidewalk unless you're sure the cat is **very** calm (cats that can be trusted not to panic in these situations are literally one-in-a-million!). The noise and motion of cars, people, other animals, etc., can cause a cat to panic, slip its harness, and dash into danger. The best place for your leashed cat is in your own quiet back yard with you.

Grooming:

Maine Coons present little grooming problems. Their coats are easy to maintain, and a weekly combing with a wide-toothed comb followed by a slicker brush or a soft pet brush is all that is generally necessary (use a flea comb on the face and ear furnishings). Keep in mind that regular grooming is necessary to prevent the cat from developing hairballs, which can cause vomiting and/or intestinal blockage.

You will have to comb your cat more often in the spring and autumn, which are seasons of heavy shedding. Pay particular attention to the

areas behind and below the ears, the flanks, the britches, between the back legs, and under the front legs. These are the areas where mats most readily form.

If you wish to keep your cat looking like a champion, a bath occasionally with a good pet shampoo, followed by blow-drying and a good combing is recommended. If the tail is extra oily (a particular problem with unaltered male cats), rub mechanics' hand cleaner into the dry tail and wash out with Dawn or Morning Fresh dishwashing liquid. Be sure to rinse all traces of soap out of the coat, and don't **ever** leave the cat unattended with hand-cleaner on its coat. If the kitten objects to the hair-dryer or fan heater, place it in its carrier with the dryer propped up a reasonable distance from the door. Leave the kitten in the carrier for about 15 minutes, then comb it out and allow it to air dry in a warm, draft-free room. **Keep the heat set on low whenever using a hair-dryer or fan heater on a cat.**

CARING FOR YOUR KITTENS CLAWS (AND YOUR FURNITURE!):

Trim your kitten's claws regularly. This is not hard and your kitten is used to it. Be careful to not trim too close to the quick.

Provide at least one, or better yet, several scratching posts for your kitten as soon as possible. (The kitten has been used to using one at our house.) Encourage and praise the baby when it uses the post; squirt it with a spray bottle of water and shame it when it uses something else (see 'Training' below).

TRAINING

Contrary to widespread belief, cats are trainable by proper methods: rewards and tangible but removed punishment (see 'Spray Bottle Method,' below).

Be firm and patient with your kitten. By teaching it the house rules now, you can avoid future behavioural problems. Actions that are cute in a kitten may not seem so cute in an adult (such as nursing on your arm or sitting on the dining room table). If the kitten scratches its claws where it shouldn't, say "NO," take it to its scratching post, and make scratching motions with its feet. Kittens respond well to a firm voice and patience. They are naturally fastidious, and want to behave.

The Spray Bottle Method:

Behaviour problems that don't respond to "NO!" can usually be modified by giving the kitten a quick shot of water from a spray bottle. This method removes you from the punishment in the kitten's mind, which is desirable for two reasons: The kitten doesn't begin to fear you as a source of punishment (as it would if you spank!), and it thinks the water is an 'Act of God,' and will refrain from the undesirable behaviour even if you aren't around. (A similar method works to keep your kitten from running outdoors: Stand outside, hose in hand, door open, and spray the kitten when it sets foot outside. After a few times,

the kitten will decide that there's nothing out there that it wanted anyway!

PLAY -- WHEN, HOW LONG, WHAT KIND?

Kittens and adult Maine Coons like to play. Generally, the morning or early evening (following afternoon naps) is the best time if you want an enthusiastic response, especially in an adult cat.

We try to discourage rough play, as this can make the kitten too aggressive. (If the kitten kicks at your hand or bites at your fingers, say "NO," blow in its face, and remove your hand.)

If you have small children DO NOT let them get over – excited when playing with your kitten. Kittens do scare easily and are also very easily hurt. Never let your small child play unattended with your kitten. Also it is VERY important your children (and You!) learn hold to hold a Maine Coon kitten. Maine Coons are very heavy and long bodied cats. They MUST have their back end supported when being picked up and held.

Soft toys with no small, easily removed and swallowed pieces are good toys; a twisted paper attached to a string tied to a stick is wonderful. With it you can go 'fishing for kittens,' and the pouncing and jumping it elicits is great exercise for the kitten. (If you use this type of toy, don't leave the kitten unattended with it; the kitten may well get dangerously tangled in the string.)

Remember that what your kitten needs most is your time and attention. Especially if it is left alone during the day, it will be very glad to see you in the evening, and demand quite a bit of attention. Please remember that kittens are sensitive, living creatures, and don't allow your friends, children, or other pets to mishandle this baby. One sure way to guarantee an unsatisfactory pet is to mistreat it, even inadvertently. On the other hand, plenty of attention, love, and considerate play will result in a companion who will give years of joy.

YOUR KITTEN, ITS LITTER BOX AND FIP:

FIP or Feline Infectious Peritonitis is a fairly rare but fatal disease in Cats caused by the mutation of the normally harmless Feline Coronavirus (FCoV). This Virus usually infects the gut of the cat and causes no problems and is generally passed harmlessly out of the cat's body via faeces. Transmission from cat to cat is via the faecal/oral route hence the Litter Box being a prime source of infection, especially in a "multi-cat" home.

It is estimated that around 97% of Multi-cat households in Australia have Coronavirus. Only 5% of cats infected with FCoV go onto develop the disease FIP. Despite enormous research it is still a poorly understood disease. No one knows exactly why the majority of cats

suffer no effects but some have the virus mutate in their body and develop the fatal disease. At the moment Scientists are looking at 3 main areas. Viral Load in the Environment, Genetic Susceptibility and Stress Levels.

Breeders are trying to do their bit by keeping in contact with the owners of kittens they have bred and if any of them have succumbed to FIP to look very carefully at the parents of those kittens and if a genetic pattern seems to be there desexing and shutting down that "line".

To keep down any potential Viral Load in my environment, I have tried to be very conscientious with hygiene in my cattery. My litter boxes are cleaned thoroughly with Bleach each day, all old litter is disposed of and trays filled with fresh litter. This why I DO NOT recommend the method of Scooping solid and wet waste and "topping up" with more litter. I want to be sure that no faecal matter remains in my trays so the whole lot gets dumped daily and if necessary even MORE often! I then wash down the floors where my trays are with F10 Veterinary disinfectant as litter that is "Tracked" can also carry the virus. I use **Breeder's Choice** litter, as it is reasonably cheap and easy to dispose of. Solids get flushed down the toilet and the rest can be thrown away with general garbage or apparently used as garden mulch. It is recycled paper.

I hope that new families will make the cleaning of their cat's litter boxes a daily priority.

The final factor is Stress. Major stressful events are thought to sometimes push an individual cat's immune system to low levels making them more susceptible. However as we humans know, Stress is a part of life but it is worth keeping this factor in mind and avoid stressing your cat if possible.

Despite everyone's best efforts FIP does strike from time to time. God forbid it ever happen to your baby but if it does I will be there for you and can only support you and provide you with a replacement kitten if you lose your baby to this disease within the first 6 months. FIP at this stage can only be definitively diagnosed by autopsy. If your vet suspects FIP, please have this done. It is an awful thought but it is important.

GENERAL NOTES

Booster shots will not be required until the kitten is one year old. Your kitten has been given 2 x F3 killed vaccinations, which give protection against Feline Enteritis, Feline Rhinotracheitis (aka Feline Herpes Virus – most common cause of Cat Flu), and Feline Calicivirus.

Your kitten will need to be wormed again around the 4mth old mark with a good worming product such as Milbemax from your vet. (Do

this when you get their 3rd vac at 16 weeks.)

I recommend Revolution Flea Treatment for the complete treatment of fleas, ticks and worms and ear mites. This product is applied to the back of the cat's neck once a month. (I do my inside cats every 3 months) some cats can have allergic reactions to this product though so please ask your vet what they would recommend. If you do not use revolution you will need to make sure your kitten is wormed regularly.

NOTE: Revolution does NOT cover Tapeworm so a separate treatment will be needed for this.

Well Congratulations on your new family member! This baby is a real sweetie, and I think you'll be very happy together. If you have any questions, please remember that we are available to provide help and answer questions.

SUPPLIES

Good sized Litter box with high sides (A plastic Storage Box is often suitable)

Brand of litter recommended: Breeders Choice

Food (as noted in feeding instructions)

Three china or metal dishes

Scratching posts

Metal comb, Slicker brush/Soft petbrush

Flea Comb

Cat carrier suitable for Small Dog

Nail clippers for cats

Toys (Lots!!!)