

Kitten's Injury Needs Pampering and Time to Heal

Even a minor injury can damage a kitten's growth plate.

J. Veronika Kiklevich, DVM

Q. Our 8-week-old kitten Isaiah tried to jump off our toilet to the ceramic tile. When Isaiah made contact with the floor, he cried and began to limp on his right-front leg. He has slept pretty much all the time since the incident. He walks on the leg, but cautiously. I examined his legs and found no swelling, but when I stretch his little legs out there seems to be some discomfort. What can we do to provide comfort and aid the healing process?

A. The fact that your little kitty jumped onto ceramic rather than the carpet could have resulted in an injury. At this time, keep him on carpeted areas. He may in fact have a hairline (greenstick) fracture of one of his bones. Such fractures are common in young animals with resilient bones and they generally heal well on their own with time. He may have a soft-tissue injury, such as a torn ligament or tendon. Once again, in young animals these tend to mend rapidly on their own. If your kitten continues to limp after three or four days, consider a trip to the veterinarian for an X-ray. In rare circumstances these little guys need a splint for a short time to heal properly.

Even if he seems fine, watch that leg carefully as he grows. Sometimes even a minor injury can cause trauma to a growth plate in young animals. Should that happen, he might start developing an angular limb deformity because one bone does not grow as rapidly as the others. If this problem is caught early it can be remedied fairly easily with no long-term consequences for the joints of the affected leg.

In the meantime, keep his food, water and litter pan in an easily accessible place and make sure his footing provides some friction.