

Time to Eat!

Establish regular feeding routines with your kitten to maintain his good health.

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As creatures of habit, cats thrive on routine. They sleep in the same sunny spots during the day, gaze from the same window at the outside world and eat the same food day after day. Now that you've introduced your new kitten to your home, you'll need to establish a regular feeding routine that works with your schedule and helps maintain your pet's good health. Follow these tips to make mealtime manageable and meet your kitten's needs.

1. Maintain your kitten's current diet. When you first bring home your new pet, feed him the same food he was eating at his previous home. If you plan to change the food, do so gradually, mixing it with the kitten's current diet. A sudden change can cause upset stomach and diarrhea.
2. Feed a high-quality, complete kitten diet. Such foods are specially formulated to meet the kitten's unique nutritional needs, containing the proper balance of protein, vitamins and minerals. Your veterinarian can help you choose a food appropriate for your new pet.
3. Consider your pet's tendency to eat small amounts at a time. Don't interpret your kitten's habit of nibbling small amounts as finicky eating behavior. Ask your veterinarian if you should leave food out at all times, or offer small amounts several times a day.
4. Feed your kitten at the same time and same place each day. Your pet will quickly adjust to a feeding schedule. Start now to establish regular eating times; this can help prevent future 4 a.m. wake-up calls from your pet!
5. Provide plenty of fresh water at all times. In addition to a nutritionally complete food, your new pet needs access to fresh water to help maintain his health.
6. Don't offer treats from the table. Human foods can upset your kitten's stomach and also upset the nutritional balance provided by his regular food. Over time, too many treats can also cause your pet to gain weight.

By establishing good eating habits right from the start, you and your kitten will enjoy many happy years together. If you're not sure where to start, ask your veterinarian for guidance.

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