

Prepare for Kitten Care

Make sure you have the 10 things necessary to welcome your new kitten home.

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The day you've been waiting for has finally arrived: Your kitten is coming home! As the proud parent of a new cat, you are responsible for providing a safe environment that she can grow and play in. However, bringing home a new bundle of paws can be a challenge if you're not prepared. These essentials will help you receive the newest addition to your family:

1. **Food and water.** Kittens require special nutrients for proper growth and development. The best way to ensure your kitten gets what she needs is to feed her a high-quality diet specially formulated for kittens, or "growth." Adult cat foods may not provide adequate nutrients for your kitten during this growth phase. Teaching your kitten to enjoy different flavors and textures of these nutritious foods helps prevent her from becoming a picky eater. Many veterinarians recommend you provide a kibbled or dry kitten food as a main staple and incorporate canned or moist kitten foods as desired. Also, provide plenty of fresh water for your kitten and encourage her to drink.
2. **Litterbox and litter.** If you already have a cat, provide your new kitten with her own litterbox. Even if your kitten is the only cat in the house, multiple litterboxes help your kitten avoid accidents during her first week home. However, purchase a non-ammonia-based pet-stain cleaner, just in case. Also, consider trying out different types of litter to see which your kitten prefers.
3. **Carrier.** Transporting your kitten in a sturdy and comfortable carrier is crucial for her safety. Many owners prefer plastic carriers or crates, which are easy to clean, with grid doors that allow kittens a view of their surroundings. But fun and fashionable styles offer safety and trendiness.
4. **Water and food bowls.** It may take a little experimenting to choose the right containers for your kitten's food and water. Some kittens develop allergic responses to plastic bowls (typically on their faces), so veterinarians recommend ceramic, stainless steel or glass containers.
5. **Scratching post or cat tree.** Invest in a strong scratching post or cat tree and encourage your kitten to use this approved scratching area to prevent bad habits and furniture damage early on. Make sure the post or tree is stable enough for your kitten; if it falls down, your kitten may become intimidated and unlikely to use it again.