

Feeding Your New Kitten

- Proper nutrition is especially important for kittens, which need two to three times as many calories and nutrients as adult cats.
- Cow's milk should never be given to kittens or cats because it can give them diarrhea.
- Feed a name-brand kitten food with the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) statement on the bag or label, starting when your kitten is 3 to 4 weeks old.

Proper nutrition is especially important for kittens, which need two to three times as many calories and nutrients as adult cats. A mother cat's milk provides all of a kitten's nutritional needs during the first 4 weeks of life. A newborn kitten may nurse every 1 to 2 hours.

If you find an orphaned kitten, ask your veterinarian or an animal welfare group to help you find a mother cat with a small litter because she may be able to nurse the kitten. If you cannot find a foster mother cat, ask your veterinarian to teach you how to bottle feed the kitten with a commercial milk replacer for kittens. Cow's milk should never be given to kittens or cats because it can give them diarrhea.

At 3 to 4 weeks of age, give your kitten a commercial milk replacer for kittens and small amounts of moist, easily chewable, commercial

kitten food in shallow bowls four to six times each day. Feed a name-brand kitten food with the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) statement on the bag or label until your kitten is approximately 9 to 12 months old. You can warm the milk replacer and mix it with the kitten food. By 6 to 7 weeks of age, offer your kitten a dry commercial kitten food. At 8 to 10 weeks of

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age, most kittens are completely weaned from their mother's milk. At 6 to 12 weeks of age, feed your kitten four times a day and gradually decrease the amount of milk replacer. At 3 to 6 months of age, feed your kitten commercial kitten food three times a day. When your kitten is 6 months of age, begin feeding him or her twice daily.

An average birth weight for kittens is about 3.5 ounces, depending on breed and litter size. During the first weeks of life, a healthy kitten's body weight may double or triple. A kitten should gain 0.25 to 0.5 ounce daily until weaning (8 to 10 weeks of age).