

# Shezvan 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 1!

We (Sherry & Herman Van De Beek) require all new families of Shezvan kittens to send us regular news and photos of their kittens . . . seriously, we do love each and every baby we breed and don't want to nag, but would really appreciate it. Thank you.

### Very Important Note – number 2!!

Sometimes life's circumstances change – and for whatever reason, you may no longer be able to keep your kitten. We do require that the cat be returned to us so that we can find it a new home. If you already have a new home in mind, we need to be informed fully so we can contact the new family if required eg. if 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.

## Acclimatisation of your kitten

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. Most of all, give it time to become used to the new surroundings.

Have a quiet room prepared for your new baby. Show the kitten its litter box, food and water as soon as you get it home, then be prepared for accidents! If the kitten misses its litter box, pick it up, put it in its box and gently 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 at its own pace. After the kitten is comfortable and settled in the first room, allow it to proceed to others. Try not to startle the kitten – remember that this is a stressful time.

**Stress:** your kitten has had two of a series of three 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, encouragement and remember to speak softly. You will find that your kitten will quickly adjust.

Be aware that your kitten will probably cry frequently for the first couple of days. Although it is completely weaned, it is used to being around lots of other cats. Your baby is missing its Mum, litter mates, the smells of 'home' and is scared and lonely. As soon as your kitten makes friends with you and any other pets, the 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 pets until you are certain that they have become friends (this may take several weeks).

Here at Shezvan, our method of introducing a new kitten to other pets is simple and we've rarely had any problems.

**Step 1:** while the kitten is still new to the home and separated from the rest of the household, begin 'house tours'. Carry the kitten securely in your arms and show it around your home, talking to it reassuringly the whole time. Allow your other pets and the kitten to observe each other from a distance.

**Step 2:** as you continue this method over the next couple of days, allow the pets to get closer and perhaps sniff at each other – not too close though as your kitten is still in isolation.

**Step 3:** when the isolation period is over and the kitten and other pets are familiar with sighting each other, place the kitten on the floor near the other pets (one at a time if you have multiple animals). Watch very closely to ensure that nothing goes beyond a hiss or a growl.

Be certain to give the established pets lots of attention so that don't become jealous. This should avoid any territorial arguments.

It is always possible that the original pet may not take too kindly to someone new using its litter tray or food dish. Be prepared for this by giving the new kitten its own tray and dishes.

### **Feeding your kitten**

Your kitten has been completely weaned and is now eating a variety of wet foods three times per day. This can gradually be reduced to morning and night only at around 6 months of age. We leave dry food out all day for our cats to eat on demand. Premium dry food is the most important part of your kittens diet.

Our kittens are raised on a variety of Royal Canin Kitten sachets, Whiskas Kitten sachets, Royal Canin Kitten Dry and Macro Roo Mince. You should feed your kitten a variety or combination of these foods three times a day.

If you have to leave your kitten unsupervised during the day, leave out a little extra wet food for them to eat whilst you are away. Be sure to throw out leftovers when you return home

Please introduce the kitten to any new food gradually to avoid upsetting its stomach. Contrary to popular belief, cow's milk often isn't good for cats. Most can't digest it properly and consequently get diarrhoea.

We recommend using metal or china food and water dishes. Plastic dishes can harbour gems on the surface which can cause a condition known as feline acne - small pimples on the chin. Feline acne causes swelling and discomfort and can be very difficult to cure. If this problem arises, consult your vet for the best method of treatment.

Plenty of fresh water is essential. Maine coons adore water and will play with it if given the opportunity! They often 'dig' at their water, so place their water bowl somewhere where puddles won't be a problem. Get used to the idea that running taps are a source of constant fascination . . .!!

### **Care – do's and don'ts**

The following is a list of risks if you allow your cat to roam freely outside:

- Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)
- Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)
- Feline Aids (FIV)
- Respiratory viruses
- Cars
- Predators
- Cruel humans
- Other hazards

We **STONGLY** recommend that you don't allow your kitten to run freely outside. This would also violate the terms of our Adoption Agreement.

Cats kept inside, allowed access to a secure outdoor enclosure or taken out for walks on a leash (as described below) have a life expectancy of 12 years or more.

This can't be said for cats who are allowed outside to roam freely.

### **Safety**

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

- Dangling electrical and phone cords
- 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 risk of strangulation)
- Accessible garbage (particularly any kind of bones as they can splinter and perforate the stomach or intestines, or form an intestinal blockage)
- Needles and/or thread, knitting and/or crocheting materials
- Rubber bands (these can wrap around the intestines)
- Plastic wrap (the kitten may 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 (particularly packing peanuts which the kitten may eat)
- Cigarettes (yes – they’ll eat 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 just 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 is wise not to use any harmful chemicals in your toilet. It 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. Alternatively, used F10 veterinary disinfectant diluted according to instructions. Remember that kittens lick their paws so before careful what you use on your floors and benches.
- Keep the contact details of your vet and/or local emergency clinic stored in your phone.
- Poisonous plants. The following plants are poisonous or hazardous to cats:

Any lilies	Anemones	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	Yew	

## Collars and leashes

Your kitten is an indoor cat (as per the Adoption Agreement). If you choose to use a collar on your kitten, check it daily to ensure it doesn't become too tight as the kitten grows. If the collar is too loose, the kitten can easily catch its lower jaw in it. As your kitten is microchipped, it is much safer not to use a collar at all.

## Grooming

Maine coons present few grooming problems. Their coats are easy to maintain and a weekly grooming with a wide-toothed comb followed by a slicker brush or a soft pet brush is all that is generally necessary. Regular grooming is necessary to prevent the cat from developing hairballs which can cause vomiting and/or intestinal blockage.

You will need to comb your cat more often in the spring and autumn which is when they shed most. 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 matted hair form most.

It is recommended that you bath your cat occasionally with a good pet shampoo, followed by blow drying and combing. ***Keep the heat set on low whenever using a hair dryer or fan heater on a cat.***

## Caring for your kittens claws

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

Provide at least one (several is better!) scratching post for your kitten as soon as possible. Encourage and praise it when it makes use of it. Squirt it with a spray bottle of water and speak sternly to your kitten when it uses something else (see training below).

## Training your kitten

Cats are trainable by proper methods. 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 as cute in an adult. If the kitten scratches its claws where it shouldn't, say 'NO',

take it to the scratching post and make gently make scratching motions with its feet. Kittens respond well to a firm voice and patience. They are naturally fastidious and want to behave.

### **Playing with your kitten**

Pick a good time to play with your cat. If the kitten has just eaten or is having a big sleep, that is probably not the right time to encourage play!

Always be ready to play after the kitten has woken up from a big sleep. However, you should discourage rough play as this can make the kitten become 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, never let them play unattended with your kitten or pick it up. Only encourage quiet, gentle play and teach your child how to correctly hold a Maine coon.

Maine coons are very heavy and long bodied cats. They MUST have their back end supported when being picked up and held.

Soft toys that don't have small or easily removed and swallowed pieces are good for your kitten to play with. However, what your kitten needs most is your time and attention, especially if it is left alone during the day. It will be glad to see you and will demand a lot of your time.

Kittens are sensitive, living creatures. Don't allow your friends, children or other pets to mishandle your baby. One way to guarantee an unsatisfactory pet is to mistreat it, even inadvertently. If you give your kitten plenty of attention, love and considerate play, this will result in a companion who will provide you with years of joy.

### **Your kitten, its litter box and FIP**

FIP or Feline Infectious Peritonitis is a relatively 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, but does not cause illness. It is generally passed harmlessly out of the cats 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.

We have tried to be very conscientious with hygiene in our cattery. Our litter boxes are cleaned thoroughly with bleach each day. All old litter is disposed of and the trays are refilled with fresh litter. This is why I DO NOT recommend the method of scooping solid and wet waste and topping up with more litter. We use Breeders Choice litter (recycled paper) as it is reasonably cheap and is easy to dispose of. Solids get flushed down the toilet and the rest can be thrown away with general garbage.

We hope that new families will make the cleaning of their cats litter boxes a daily priority.

### **Caring for your kittens claws**

Your kitten will require a third F3 immunization one month after it's second, which it will have received at 11 weeks. Please check your kittens vaccination certificate for this due date. Your cat will require a booster vaccination yearly.

Your kitten will need to be wormed again at approximately four months of age with a good worming product such as Milbemax. This can be obtained from your vet or local pet supply store.

We recommend applying Revolution monthly for the complete treatment of fleas, ticks, worms and ear mites. Please note that Revolution does not cover tapeworm, so a separate treatment (Milbemax) will be needed for this.

***Congratulations! You are now the proud parent of a Shezvan Maine coon kitten!! This baby is such a darling and we think you will be very happy together. If you have any questions, please remember that we are here to help. If you have any further questions or need further assistance or advice, please don't hesitate to call.***

## SUPPLIES

- 🐱 Largest litter box you can buy (you can purchase jumbo litter boxes from some pet suppliers)
- 🐱 Breeders Choice cat litter
- 🐱 Cat food (as noted in kitten care notes)
- 🐱 Feeding bowls (china or metal)
- 🐱 Scratching posts
- 🐱 Metal comb, slicker brush and/or soft pet brush
- 🐱 Medium sized pet carrier
- 🐱 Nail clippers for cats
- 🐱 Toys