

# Kitten Care List

## Getting Home

You have waited a long time to get your kitten home, and you may be ready to play and cuddle, but this is just the beginning of a rather stressful journey for kitty. By the time you come to get them, you should have already 'pet-proofed' your home and have already purchased: food (NutriSource® Grain Free Country Select), blankets and/or a bed, toys, food and water dishes, litter boxes and litter (Tidy Cats® clumping), and 2-3 different types of scratch pads. If you have multiple levels in your home, you will want at least one litter box on each level kitty has access to, at least 2 litter boxes on the level kitty will spend most of their time, as well as 1 or 2 scratch pads/posts per level. NOTE: If you do not plan on using traditional clumping litter, you will still need to purchase some to begin with, then slowly begin to transition kitty over to the other litter by gradually adding more of the new litter to the old litter every day until you are using 100% of the new litter. Cats know their litter boxes because of the smell and texture. Using other types of litter, such as wheat, pellets, crystals, paper, etc, without properly introducing them will lead to failure – kitty will have no clue this new substance is supposed to be their new bathroom.

Going to a new home is very overwhelming and takes some time to adjust. To begin, you should have a small-to-medium sized room with a bed, a litter box, food and water dishes, a scratch post, and some toys ready for kitten. They should spend the first few days here, with you visiting frequently, to get used to the new sounds and smells. This way, they are not completely overwhelmed by a large space they can get "lost" in. After a few days, slowly start letting kitty out to explore while being supervised. You will need to keep reminding kitty where their litter box is by physically placing them in the box every few hours for the first 4-7 days. As they get used to their new surroundings, they can come out and explore more often each day, eventually letting them roam as they please.

If you have other pets, they should be quarantined from each other for 10-14 days, and should not be introduced until kitty is comfortable with the new surroundings. For cats, hissing and growling when meeting other animals is normal, but should stop within a few days. While kitty is acclimating to the new home, all other pets should be caged or placed in a room while kitty explores alone. Again, introduce kitty very slowly, allowing them to smell the other animal's scent first, either through a door or gate, or with a blanket or clothing article the other animal has used. Then introduce them under close supervision until they are completely comfortable with each other. Other pets should also be recently tested for FeLV (feline leukemia) since we are FIV/FeLV-free and do not vaccinate for this unless kitty will be going to a tested positive home. (Please notify us as soon as possible if your home is FeLV positive so we can administer the appropriate vaccines.) Two articles on introductions I highly suggest reading are [Blue Cross for Pets](#) and [Int'l Cat Care](#).

## Vet Care

Your kitten will have had their age-appropriate rounds of vaccinations, and will be altered, by the time they are ready to go home with you at 13-15 weeks old. Between 16-18 weeks old, kitty will need their last kitten FVCRPC booster, as well as their first Rabies vaccine. The FVCRPC vaccine and Rabies should be given separately, at least 2-3 weeks apart because sometimes the hairless breeds will get a cold after being vaccinated. At 6 months of age (and every year thereafter) they should have a health check-up performed by a veterinarian who is familiar with the hairless breeds. - see the 'What to Look For In A Vet' section below. As a preventative measure, you will also need to deworm kitty every 6-8 months. We use oral cat wormer, but there are also topical options. The ONLY topical solution that is proven OK for hairless breeds is Revolution. All other topicals have caused harsh reactions (especially to the skin) and should not be used.

	5-8 wks	9-12 wks	16-18 wks	16 mths	every 3 yrs
Booster	✓	✓	NEEDS	NEEDS	NEEDS
Rabies (or by law)	too young	too young	NEEDS	NEEDS	NEEDS
FeLV & FIV	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED
FIP	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED	NOT ADVISED

\* "Booster" = FVR + Chlamydia + Panleukopenia

We also highly suggest you screen kitty for HCM yearly (or as recommended by cardiologist), starting at 1 year old, as this fatal disease can show up in as little as a few months, often with no symptoms. Our adults have been tested clear, however, it is still possible for any cat/kitten to suffer from HCM at any point throughout their life.

All previous vaccinations and wormings are recorded in the Pet Health Record you'll receive with your kitten – **please base future vaccinations and procedures on the schedule and dates in the Record** (pic on pg 1). Through years of research and experience, we have come up with the following schedule to best suit our hairless breeds. It is likely different from your vet's schedule, but is customized especially for our cats, and prevents unnecessary over-vaccinating. The section in the Health Record labeled 'Vaccine Information' explains causes, symptoms, and vaccine effectiveness for each common cat disease. An excerpt of this section can be found [here](#) as well.

Among the biggest reasons for our customized schedule are: 1) most vaccines do not provide protection. This can be the result of poor vaccine performance (FIP & FeLV), lack of risk, or lack of need; and 2) many vaccines actually induce illnesses that are often worse than the disease they are meant to prevent, as well as suppress the immune system, decreasing their ability to fight off infection and sicknesses of all kinds. If you'd like more information about research and evidence on this issue, feel free to ask!

## Comfort and Playtime

Clothing, super soft fluffy blankets and baskets, puffy beds, heat sources (pet safe heating pads and beds and heated blankets with controlled heat) are all very much appreciated by your hairless baby. When using clothing (sweaters, shirts, etc.), be sure to change them daily to avoid oil buildup and skin reactions. Hairless cats also love to play. Cat trees and toys are a must, but don't have to be expensive. We find our cats actually prefer a stack of cardboard boxes over fancy 'kitty tents', which is a plus, because they are inexpensive and if kitty feels the need to be destructive and bite and claw at something, they don't get in trouble for doing it to the box! Hairless breeds love to climb and to be in the sun, so if you are able to make (or buy) a kitty shelf, placing it near the top of a window (one with no drafts, please!) will make it one of kitty's favorite places!

## Feeding

Hairless breeds also have a higher metabolism because of their need to keep warm, so they eat more than an average cat. Because of this, we highly suggest you free-feed kitty (give unlimited access to dry food at all times). Always provide **premium** dry cat food and fresh water at all times. Although we feed a raw meat diet throughout the day, we also leave dry food out for them to eat. We use, and highly suggest NutriSource® Grain Free Country Select recipe, because it's easy on their digestive system and high in protein. **\*\*NOTE:** If you do not feed the same food they are used to, or suddenly switch foods at any time, they will most likely get diarrhea until their system readjusts to the new food. So, if you do not wish to continue feeding what they are on, you will need to switch them to the new brand slowly, gradually adding more of the new brand every couple days until you are feeding 100% of the new brand.

As kittens, we feed about ½ can of soft food 2-3 times daily until they are about 4-5 months old; then reduce to 1-2 times daily from 6-9 months old; and then down to 1 time every 1-2 days from then on. We never limit the amount of dry food provided, and always have it available for our cats.

Different hairless cats have different body builds. Some are more bulky and plump, while others can be lean and more athletic; however, your cat should not be too bony (some healthy cat's back and hip bones may even show, but never their whole rib cage or full shoulder blade).

If kitty seems to be heavy or overweight, limit or cut the wet food from their diet. If that doesn't fix the issue, you *can* limit their dry food, however, an adult hairless cat should never be offered less than 2 cups per day of grain-free food, or 3 cups per day of other dry food, and a kitten's dry food should never be limited.

**\*\*\*\***Raisins, grapes, onions, and chocolate are all poisonous to both cats and dogs, so be sure to keep these things out of reach from your pets. **\*\*\*\***

## Grooming

Since the hairless have very little hair to absorb body oils, they have to be bathed, usually at least once every 2-3 weeks. You can use any kind of mild baby or sensitive cat shampoo. We also suggest thoroughly rubbing coconut oil all over them before their bath, as it helps to loosen dirt and oil. Just be sure to rinse kitty properly or they will attract more dirt than normal! If your hairless gets dirty in between baths, you can wipe them down with a fragrance-free baby wipe or a warm, damp cloth. Our kittens start having bi-weekly baths at about 5 weeks of age. And even though hairless have very little hair, they still lick and groom themselves (and other things) like any other cat! This means they can get hairballs from things like their blankets and clothing or other animals.

## Ears

The hairless' ears also need to be cleaned, typically on a weekly basis. Using a pet ear cleaner made for cats or suds from their bath, will help dissolve dirt and waxy build-up in their ears. First, clean the outer ear gently with a cotton ball and the cleaner (or warm water), then move to the inner ear with a few Q-tips and cleaner. Be very delicate, as the instruments near where you must clean are quite sensitive.

## Eyes

The hairless breeds also lacks eyelashes, which can result in dirt and 'goop' in the corners of their eyes. This can sometimes cause the eyes to look red and irritated. Use a clean soft washcloth with warm water and gently wipe the cats' eyes and face. Only use a clean cloth with fresh clean water for your cats' eyes and face so you don't spread any bacteria or infection into them.

## Nails

To help prevent damage to your furniture and belongings, the nails need to be kept clipped and clean. Just like a dog's nails, if you clip a cat's nails too short, it will cause them pain and discomfort, and will sometimes bleed. Pay attention to where the 'quick' is, and do not cut or file beyond it. Nail covers are also an option. We usually use an infant nail clipper – it's quick and easy. We at MN Sphynx DO NOT condone declawing, and prohibit the declawing of any cat purchased from us. Dirt can also stick to kitty's claws. If this happens, simply extend the nail and wipe it off with a wet towel, or scrape it off with your nail.

## What to Look For In A Vet For Your hairless

Through personal experience, we've found that even the most skilled Veterinarian may not be the best choice for your hairless. If they don't have *considerable* first-hand experience treating and evaluating hairless, or aren't willing to research and/or consult with another vet, they may misdiagnose or order unnecessary tests. We personally spent over \$500 on unnecessary lab tests because the vet we previously used was convinced Gilly had mites and an infection because ear wax was not 'normal' for cats. When all of the tests results came back normal and healthy, and the vet still refused to acknowledge that there are some things that are 'different' about hairless, we changed vets.

A few things that are a bit different from other cats:

- Metabolism – hairless' metabolize about twice as fast as other cat breeds. This not only means they require more hard food, but also that their body dispenses of medications and other supplements quicker than 'normal' (for example, a hairless will recover and wake up from being sedated far before a 'typical' cat will).

- Bonding – although there are also a few other cat breeds that enjoy human companions, a hairless will actually become lonely and depressed if they don't get enough bonding time with their family.
- Ears - If you bring your hairless to a vet who is unfamiliar with this breed, and their ears are even a little bit dirty, they will likely diagnose them with ear mites. 99% of the time, this is NOT the case, it is just that the wax produced in the hairless' ears, along with dirt and oil from the skin, makes it darker (almost black) than wax from other breeds of cats. Ear mites are accompanied by scratching and itching and bumps on the skin.
- Eyes – Again, if your vet is not familiar with the hairless breed, they will probably diagnose the normal leakage as conjunctivitis. Hairless breeds usually do not have eyelashes, so 'eye boogers' are normal, and can just be cleaned with a baby wipe or wet towel. Eye mucus and occasional leaking is normal and should be gel-like and either clear or slightly brownish. If the discharge becomes excessive, cloudy or yellow, or very runny, then seek medical attention.
- Nose – Since hairless often lack a significant amount of nose hairs, they can sometimes sneeze more than other cats. Sneezing, alone, is nothing to be concerned about, unless it's severely affecting their breathing. If sneezing is accompanied by irritated eyes, a runny nose, a rash, or other symptoms, kitty should be examined by a vet.
- Susceptibility – hairless' immune systems naturally have a lower tolerance than other cats; add their sensitivity to temperature change, and this puts them at a higher risk for illness. As a general precaution, we have designed a Vaccine Schedule (pg 1) to minimize the stress and immune system suppression caused by vaccinations, while still giving them the protection they need.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us! Our vet, Dr. Tami Bauer, has been working with us for over 6 years. She is available at 507-451-8153, and she can also answer any questions you (or your vet) may have.

Most importantly...Enjoy your new family member!

- Llyssa & Andy