

## **A New Kitten!**

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You've fallen in love with an adorable fur ball with soft eyes and a plaintive meow.

How can you choose among a litter of kittens, each as adorable as the next?

Firstly, observe closely these little kittens. A healthy kitten should be curious (he will approach you), vigorous, and cheerful – except, of course, during nap time! The kitten should have bright eyes without discharge. His ears should be clean. If they contain a black substance, it could indicate the presence of parasites, called ear mites. Next, examine his mouth. His gums should be pink, without lesions or ulcers. Sneezes or coughs may indicate a respiratory infection. Make sure that there is no discharge coming from his nostrils. His coat should be shiny and free of skin flakes. He shouldn't have any hairless patches with hard skin as this may indicate a mycosis infection (a type of fungus). Also, check to make sure that his bum isn't soiled with stool as this may indicate diarrhea. If possible, ask to see the kitten's stool: it should be firm.

Even if your kitten appears to be in perfect health, he could be suffering from medical problems that are not evident. This is why a visit to the vet is your next step. The veterinarian will examine your kitten in detail and administer the necessary vaccines.

Finally, don't forget to spay or neuter your kitten at around six months of age to prevent her from going into heat, or him from misbehaving and marking his territory.

What to do if you adopt a kitten but you already have another cat?

It is important to keep the newcomer separate from your older cat for ten days. This is to prevent the sharing of any illnesses between them. During this time, have a veterinarian check your new kitten for any parasites or contagious diseases. Once your kitten has received his clean bill of health and has been vaccinated, you may allow the cats to meet under your close supervision. At first, put them together for short periods of time, and then gradually increase the length of these meetings. Make sure that each cat has his own food and water bowls so that your older cat doesn't feel invaded by the new arrival. With a little time, their friendship will blossom!

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