

## KITTEN INSTRUCTIONS/HINTS:

Your kitten has been raised in a loving atmosphere and we will certainly be concerned about its future care and health. These hints have been prepared to help you adjust your kitten to his/her new environment with as little difficulty as possible. If you have any problems or concern, no matter how trivial it may seem, please feel free to call for advice.

Birmans do not mature until they are about three years old, so the next few years will be very important in the health and training of your kitten. Remember no question is silly or dumb, and I am here to help you and your cat in any way possible. You can even call in the middle of the night if you are worried about your cat. You are NEVER bothering me.

Your cat is important to all of us.

### Food:

Your kitten is currently eating a "mix" of dry food which is four equal parts of Royal Canin/Eukanuba/Science Diet/Nutro dry kitten chow. The kittens seem to enjoy this mix and do well growth wise. This should also allow you to slowly alter their food if you have a preference for one brand over the other. When switching your kitten slowly mix the foods together over several weeks so as not to upset their digestive system. Dry food has been available to them at all times. They are used to this and do not overeat, but do like to nibble throughout the day and night. Kitten dry food should be fed through the first 9 months to year - you will know it's time to switch over if your kitten begins getting too chubby. Please note that all of my cats (including my spay) continue to eat kitten chow as they lose weight when switched to adult formula. Most important is that your kitten likes his food and it agrees with him.

Kittens up to the age of six months should be fed two to three times per day. (Since their dry food is always available this is not a hard and fast rule, but a habit they are currently used to). The kittens are fed in the morning, evening or late afternoon and just before bed a "treat" of canned food. They seem to do best on Iams kitten canned food and adult flavors of Science Diet canned food. Don't worry about feeding the kitten adult food in canned form, premium foods are fine for kittens and are a good way to introduce them to adult food. It can also help prevent obesity in adult cats, as with humans, their fat cells are developed as kittens. They will get plenty of protein from the dry food. I have found that feeding just before bed helps humans get a better night sleep since the kitten is less prone to waking you up if they aren't hungry. If the kittens stools become loose, mix in a small (1/4 to 1/2 teas. Of canned pumpkin into the canned food or let them eat it plain if they like it - the fiber will firm them right up).

Always make sure the kitten has plenty of fresh water. We recommend feeding kitty in glass/pottery dishes. Plastic dishes hold bacteria and can be the cause of Chin Dirt (acne) in cats. Please do not feed kitty chocolate or aspirin as it is a toxin to cats. Milk and milk products cause diarrhea and should be avoided - with the exception of a squirt or two of Reddy Whip from the can, which they absolutely love. However, feeding small pieces of apple, banana and grapes will not hurt kitty, nor will pieces of dry cereal such as rice krispies.

### **Treats/Supplements:**

Your kitten has been introduced to Kitty Kaviar, purchased at cat shows and available at Land of Paws in Kansas City. This is a wonderful treat as it has a very high protein content and is made of salmon skin.

The kittens also like FeloVite II which is a vitamin supplement, NutroCal which is a wonderful supplement to have on hand for a sick kitty, and Petromalt which is a hairball remedy and acts as a laxative. NutroCal and Petromalt can be purchased at any pet supply store and come in tube form. Be careful to feed in small doses so as not to give the kitten loose stools. However, with longhaired cats a small amount of Petromalt on the end of your finger fed several times a week is a nice treat, a healthy supplement and good for hairball prevention. (If your kitten has little or no appetite and appears to be attempting to vomit or has a dry cough this is a usual sign of a hairball - in this case feed about one inch of Petromalt for two days. If the kitten is not better call your vet).

### **Litter Box:**

Your kitten has been litter boxed trained by their mother for about six weeks. The litter box should not be placed near the kitten's food. It should be in a quiet place near the area where your kitten will spend most of its time. (If your home is large or on several levels you may want a box in various places until the kitten is old enough to make the run from floor to floor). If you move the box do it in increments and be sure to show the kitten so they know where their box is located. Cats are creatures of habit and like their environment to remain the same. I recommend a (large) covered litter box as this is best suited to adult cat habits and helps keep your home cleaner, with plastic liners for ease of cleaning.

Your kitten is used to a mix of non-clumping, clay litter (Tidy Cat) and scoopable litter (Litter Clean) - both purchased at Sams Club. If you choose to change do it slowly over a period of a month. We use Tidy Cat with either the blue or red label. The kitten is used to both kinds. A small amount of baking soda in the bottom of the box or litter pan liner helps to control odor. Clean the litter box with a solution of 1 to 10 bleach and water at least every couple of weeks to disinfect. Spraying the box with a mix of vinegar and water solution (mix about 1/8 vinegar to water) in between times is a good solution to kill urine odor - this also works well on carpet and hard surfaces if kitty has an accident. Nolvasan S is also a wonderful disinfectant to use weekly to clean litter boxes. I also recommend Clorox Wipes for daily clean up and refreshing the litter box.

### **Training:**

A spray bottle will help you train your kitten, along with firmly saying "no". The bottle works best if the kitten doesn't know where the water came from. This can help you teach kitty not to do something and will not hurt the kitten. If the kitten goes through a chewing stage (usually four to six months while teething) use a Bitter Apple spray on cords, etc. Be sure to test items that could stain before using. The mother cat grips her kitten by her teeth at the back of the neck to discipline her baby. You can simulate this with a pinch at the back of the neck while telling kitty "no".

### Grooming:

Your kitten has received at least one bath. They usually don't object to the water (make sure it's warm, but not too hot - kittens have sensitive skin which can easily burn). Use a shampoo formulated for cats or kittens and make sure you rinse thoroughly. Shampoo left in the fur feels sticky and the cat will end up licking it out which may not be the best for it's digestion. They do not really like to be blown dry, but will become accustomed to the procedure. It is important to dry your kitten, so the it does not get chilled, with a dryer blowing only cool air ( I usually will also blow a little while with warm air to keep kitty warm, but be sure the nozzle is at least 4 inch away form the kitten and keep it moving to avoid burning their skin). I usually hold the kitten in my lap, wrapped in a towel and blow them dry beginning at the tail and working forward. Make sure to protect their face and ears so air isn't blown into them. The object is to speed the drying process as quickly as possible, it's OK if they aren't totally dry on their feet and tail. They will continue to lick themselves dry. Another method is to hold the kitten at waist height on a counter, holding the kitten with one hand and the dryer with the other, continually ruffling the fur to help dry at the base. Do this in a small room with the door closed to avoid escapees.

They are also used to having their nails clipped about every two weeks. I use cat nail trimmers purchased at any pet supply store. Hold the kitten firmly between your body and one arm, trim with the other hand. Be careful not to trim too closely or the kittens nail will bleed. Birman's nails are usually white which helps as you can see the translucent part which is safe to trim. I use a Resco cat mail trimmer, which has red handles and you can purchase replaceable blades. These are available at Pet stores and cat shows.

Your kitten is used to being combed and likes this. I use a medium length comb and gently comb with the fur. You can also gently comb against the fur to help with shedding. I generally comb the cats once a week because they like it, but their fur will not mat, so monthly grooming is OK. My favorite type of comb is a "Greyhound" brand which can only be purchased at cat shows (Maloron web site carries them).

### Favorite web sites:

[www.maloron.com](http://www.maloron.com)

[www.scbf.com](http://www.scbf.com)

Look for Talistar's website coming in 2002!

### What to share with your Vet:

Be sure to take your health record with you when you visit the vet so they can update it and see what vaccines kitty has already received. Also your vet should be aware that Birmans can be sensitive to anesthesia. Isoflorine is recommended for Birmans. Learn to take your cats temperature, with the help of your vet. A cats normal temperature is 100.5 to 102.5. If the cat has a temp of 102.8 or above call your vet for his opinion. If possible I recommend having your kitty's yearly shots given on two different occasions, as the cats seem to have fewer reactions. I give my cats their shots on an 18-month schedule (except for Rabies since it's a state law in Kansas). They are vaccinated one to two weeks apart for their 4-way (Rhino, calici, panleuk., chlamydia) and later for FeLK, with Rabies given at another time. I use and recommend Ft. Dodge vaccines.