



Lightfoot Ragdolls

Basic Healthcare and Safety for Kittens and Cats

Kittens should be kept in a safe, clean area. Keep your litter boxes clean (scoop several times a day) and wash food and water bowls daily.

Kittens should receive their first FVRCP at around 8 weeks, and then 2 boosters, in about 3-4 intervals afterwards. They won't need another one until a year old after the third one, and then after that, every 3 years. Rabies shouldn't be given until 6 months old and NOT given at the same time as any other vaccine. You vet may not have a problem doing that, but I wouldn't recommend it. Sometimes they can have an adverse reaction to a vaccination. If you do both at the same time, you won't know which one the reaction was from.

Your vet will probably recommend a check up every year. Unless you have diarrhea or vomiting issues that don't resolve quickly, or an upper respiratory infection or some other thing, that should be sufficient. It's normal for your kitten to sneeze a bit, maybe get some eye crusties after you go home. They are adjusting to a new environment with different smells and such in your home. If it continues more than 5-7 days, please take your kitten in to be checked out to make sure they didn't catch something.

Dental work is another thing most cat owners don't think much about until it's too late. Usually your dentist will let you know if he sees anything going on there on your annual visits. Tartar will build up, gums can swell. Ask your vet how often he or she recommends a dental cleaning. You can brush your cat's teeth! You can buy a special toothbrush and toothpaste made for cats. Remember to clean it well after and replace it every few months like you do your own. It's a really good idea to figure out how to do it and make that commitment.

Cats are VERY good at hiding illness. Take care to notice if they aren't eating or drinking normally, or litter box usage has changed, or vomiting or diarrhea. A cat suddenly not using the litter box can be a huge sign something is wrong. Sometimes they will just be acting "off" or get a little aggressive or growl when you pick them up. I got a call recently from a poor lady that had a 6 year old cat that suddenly acted sick. She said she got him from a breeder near me, but couldn't remember the name. She wondered if I had heard of a cat suddenly getting very sick before. She took him to the vet. They did some bloodwork and said something or another was off, but then said, "he's in kidney failure." She was devastated. They said they could give him pain meds and she could kind of nurse him along for a few weeks, but he wasn't going to make it. She had to make the difficult decision to

put him to sleep. She said as she looked back over the last couple months that he had started acting differently. One day she went to pick him up and he hissed, which wasn't anything like his normal behavior. She didn't think anything of it at the time. She said she realizes he had slowed down, wasn't eating well, etc. Unlike dogs, it may take some detective work to know your cat is sick. Watch playing activities, food, water, litter box usage (including if they are going regularly, not using the litter box, etc.), touch. Check their teeth regularly.

If you brush your cat weekly or more (even better!), the cat will have less hairballs.

Watch toys! I had a cute, shiny plastic ribbony wand toy that the cats really liked. I noticed after playing with them, sometimes one of the ribbons would be on the floor. I missed one once and later found a cat chewing something. I ended up pulling out a long bit of it he had started swallowing. Cats generally aren't as bad as dogs in chewing and eating all kinds of things, but it happens. That can be a very expensive surgery to remove things your cat eats. Just like a baby, make sure the toys don't have small parts that can be chewed off and swallowed, that you don't have small plastic parts laying around they might swallow. Don't leave a wand toy out when you are not playing with it. They can swallow the string or get wrapped up in it and suffocate. If you use laser pens, make sure to avoid their eyes, as it can blind them. The most common surgeries for cats that are dangerous and expensive are swallowed string, ribbon and hair ties. Please make sure they are away from your cat. Put cord shields around your cords!

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