



## **Metallicat British Shorthairs**

*Silver Tabbies and Silver Spotteds*

**Helen Nicholson,  
'Westmead'  
15, Eynsford Road,  
Farningham,  
Kent. DA4 0BD**

**Email:** [helen@metallicat.com](mailto:helen@metallicat.com)

## **Guidelines to caring for your new kitten**



### **Settling In –**

When you get home, let your kitten find its own way out of the basket or box, and allow it to explore one room at a time. Make sure it knows where its litter tray and water bowl are.

The toilet and feeding areas should not be too close together.

Make sure the room is escape-proof – chimneys blocked, doors and windows shut. Kittens can get through surprisingly small gaps.

Do not overwhelm your kitten with too much attention. Let it come to you naturally - remember you are a stranger to it. Talk to it, and encourage it to play with a toy (cotton reels and ping-pong balls are favourites).

Do not restrain your kitten and force it to sit on your knee. Your lap should be a haven, not a prison. Patience with your kitten in the first few hours will be amply rewarded.

Kittens can often be frightened by children or other pets. Children should understand that they must keep very still and quiet, and let the kitten approach them, NOT the other way round!

Very small children should not be introduced until the kitten has had a chance to settle.

Other animals should be introduced later, one at a time, and under supervision.



**Feeding Habits** - Our kittens are used to being fed three times a day. Usual feeding times are breakfast, dinner and supper.

Water and dry food (biscuits) should be available at all times.



## Diet –

Food given raw can be rabbit, beef, heart - not liver as it is a laxative. Cooked meat can be rabbit, chicken, turkey etc, making sure all bones are removed. Fish must always be cooked - dark or white varieties i.e. cod, coley etc, again making sure all bones are removed. Cats do appreciate a small amount of cooked vegetables from time to time.

Preferred tinned foods are Whiskas and Felix.

Tinned pilchards, tuna, salmon or sardines can be given as an occasional treat, but not the varieties which come in brine. Don't feed fish more than once a week, as it is low in iron. Feed a good variety of foods and your cat should be fit and healthy. It should have an alert look, a soft glossy coat and clear bright eyes.

Quantities - Try one tablespoon per meal to start with. If this is not enough, you will soon be informed of the fact! As the kitten grows, increase the quantities and reduce the number of meals until, by 9 months (when the kitten is officially a cat) your cat is having two meals a day plus a good quality complete dried food (e.g. James Wellbeloved, Vitalin, IAMs or Hills Science Diet) and fresh water available at all times.

Apart from the dry cat food, never leave food down - always take away what is not eaten. Do not leave cat food in the tin once opened. It is best put in plastic container with a tight lid. Don't feed straight from the fridge.

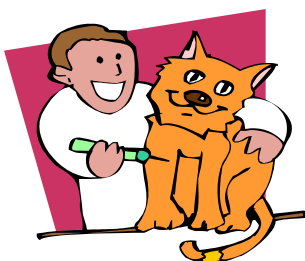


**Never** feed cows milk or milk products such as cheese or yoghurt, as this can cause severe tummy upset and diarrhoea (I have found that even one drop can do this). Vary your kitten's diet as much as possible.

Like children, kittens vary in their likes and dislikes and behaviour patterns, and even kittens within the same litter will vary. If your kitten turns its nose up at some of the food, don't panic! It will come around. An unbalanced diet can cause serious deficiency diseases, so do not encourage your cat to become a fussy feeder. Occasionally a greedy kitten will bolt its food and bring it straight back undigested. It does not mean that the food disagrees with it, but that the food should be fed in smaller quantities or mashed up more finely. Large lumps could make a kitten choke! Fresh water must be available at all times! A well-fed, well cared-for cat, that has exercise, fresh air and a sensible home, will ail very little.

## Inoculations –

Your kitten has been vaccinated against Feline Infectious Enteritis, Cat Flu and Leukaemia. It is important to keep inoculations up to date, renewing boosters annually, to keep your kitten fully protected against these diseases.



## Worming –

Your kitten has been wormed regularly since the age of 2 weeks. This needs to be continued to remain free from internal parasites and therefore healthy. It is best to consult your vet about worming, as they will be able to prescribe the correct dose, which is dependent on weight, for your individual kitten

## Ears –

Your kitten has clean healthy ears. You can keep them this way with a weekly check. Never poke a cats ears with cotton buds!

An ear problem which is neglected (Ear Mange, Otitis or Canker) can result in an infection spreading through the middle ear, causing pain and distress. Ear problems can be caught from another infected cat, but likewise can be easily treated if spotted early.

## Beds and Bedding –

A cardboard box makes a perfectly satisfactory bed and is most hygienic, if renewed frequently. Equally, any plastic bed is suitable, as it can be easily disinfected. All bedding should be washed and changed often - cats like to be clean. All our kittens are born in the living room, where they get used to all the usual household noises and the litter tray. They love a lap, a cuddle and lots of toys for playtime. No toys dangling from string or elastic - they can be very dangerous. Ping-pong balls, crunched up paper, small soft toys, small toy mice or hand held cat teasers are the favourites.

**Never lend a cat basket and never borrow one** – it may have been used for transporting a sick cat. Always disinfect the basket after a visit to a vet or a cat show. Keep your basket on your lap at the vets, as it is possible for your cat to pick up infections from the floor.



## Litter Trays –

These should be available at all times. Cat litter is now easily available in all supermarkets. Keep clean and change frequently.

Wash out the with detergent and water. Only use a safe disinfectant - many contain active ingredients which are **toxic** to cats (such as Dettol).

Household bleach diluted with water is safe.

Do not expect your kitten to stay clean if you play hide and seek with the litter tray - keep it in the same place.

Cats do not like to use a dirty tray anymore than you would like to use a dirty lavatory, and have been known to refuse an unkempt tray!

## Grooming –

Brush and hand groom regularly! Don't faint if you see a flea - do something sensible like buying a flea comb and USE it. It is far easier to keep a cat free from fleas, than it is to try and clean up an infested one.

“Front Line”, purchased from your Vet, is a most effective form of flea control. With a kitten, the required dose can be sprayed onto a comb and combed into the fur - this is sufficient for 1 month. Flea collars do not work very well and may result in damaged neck fur and bald patches. Any cat given its freedom is liable to pick up the odd flea.

Remember, fleas carry disease that can kill, i.e. Feline Anaemia.

If there are fleas on your cat, the chances are, they are in the house too, or very soon will be.

Staykill or Acclaim used on carpets and furniture will ensure, that your house is free from fleas.

If your cat will have to wear a collar with your name and phone number, it is best for the kitten to get used to this from an early age.

**Do not, however, leave a collar on permanently;** take it off, when the cat is in at night.

Regular hand grooming is necessary for that extra special gloss when showing a cat. However, no amount of grooming will bring a cat into show condition, if it is under the weather!

If your cat is not very well, get him/her treated by a vet immediately - delay can cost life, especially in a kitten.

All our kittens are sold with insurance cover, and we feel that it is important to maintain this throughout the cat's life. Vet's fees, even for minor illnesses, can be very expensive, and should an accident occur, they can escalate very rapidly.



## Microchipping –

This is a way which a cat or kitten can be permanently identified. A miniature transponder (the microchip - it is about the size of a grain of rice) is inserted under the skin by the vet. The chip has a unique identity number on it, which can then be read by a scanner. This chip is safer for the cat than a collar, as it cannot be lost or become snagged on anything.

## Neutering and spaying –

This is absolutely essential for any animal not used for breeding and is best done between the ages of six to nine months. A British Male can usually wait a little longer depending upon the time of year and development of the cat.

Neutering too early can stop the development of that nice big head a British cat should have.

Remember though, that an un-neutered Tom can be a menace. He will wander off, get into fights, mark his territory or even have his mind so set on ideas of 'love' that he crosses a road and then is injured or killed.

It is equally cruel to keep an un-spayed female, when you do not wish to breed from her. A calling queen will wear herself down, lose a lot of weight and become thoroughly frustrated. Equally, there is no need for a neutered cat to become fat - it will only lead to heart failure and kidney problems and thereby shorten the cat's life.



### **Safety –**

Keep washing machines and tumble dryer doors firmly closed.

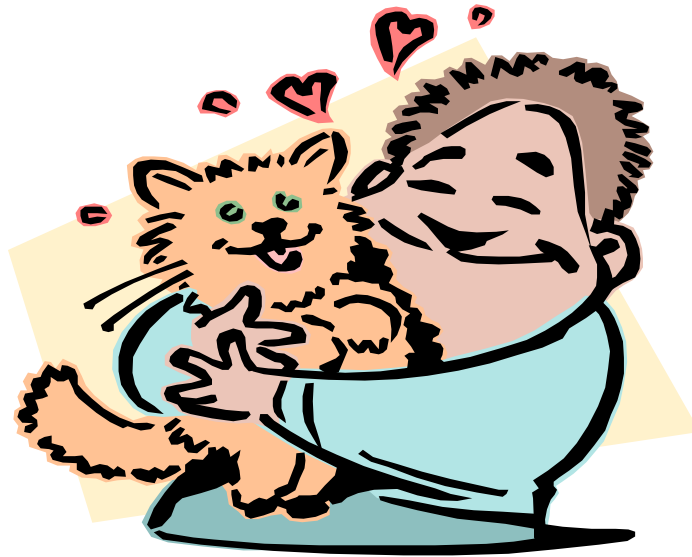
Also if you have an open fireplace, cover it, as a frightened kitten or cat might scramble up the flue in a bid to escape.

Shut down lavatory seats - kittens are curious and can drown.

Look out for poisons in garages sheds and under sinks.

Don't leave unsafe tools in the garden or broken glass around.

Let common sense prevail at all times.



## **General –**

Always make sure your cat is in at night.

Don't let a kitten go outdoors, unless you are there to supervise it.

Love your kitten, play with it, talk to it. You will find it highly intelligent.

Do not smack it, shout at it or confuse it.

Do not allow young children to disturb its sleep or display it to their friends.

Provide safe toys for it to play with.

A scratching post will save your furniture and wallpaper, as will regular cutting of your kittens claws (consult your vet on this, as over-clipping will cause bleeding, pain and possibly infection).

Don't be alarmed when your kitten sheds its first teeth - this is supposed to happen (usually at about 5 or 6 months old).

## **News –**

It is always nice to hear how you and your kitten are getting on together, and we are pleased to offer help and advice.

