



Kitten Pre-acquisition Inspection Checklist

When examining a kitten, ask yourself the following questions. Ideally, all of your answers should be “yes.” Even a single “no” is cause for careful consideration.

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| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Inspect the kitten’s mother. Is she free of major physical and/or mental shortcomings that might be passed to her offspring? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Is the kitten at least 8 weeks old? (Kittens younger than 8 weeks should not be separated from their mother and littermates.) |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Does the kitten seem alert, happy, and eager to socialize with you? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Does the kitten seem gentle and amiable? (A kitten who engages in unwarranted hissing or seems overly stressed by your presence may have a significant software glitch.) |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Has the kitten received all vaccinations and medical care appropriate for its age? (See Chapter 8: Visiting Your Veterinarian.) |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Is the kitten’s stool firm? (A thin kitten may be malnourished or have worms.) |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Are its eyes clear and free of discharge? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Are its ears and nose free of discharge? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Is its coat clean and shiny? Does the kitten take an interest in cleaning itself? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Is its breathing regular, with no coughing and/or wheezing? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No | Is its body physically sound, with no lameness or tenderness anywhere? |

 **EXPERT TIP:** In the case of purebred kittens, it is wise to have them screened for specific genetic disorders (such as hip dysplasia, deafness, etc.) that are common to specific breeds. And no matter what sort of kitten you plan to acquire, make any sale contingent on an examination and approval by your veterinarian. Detecting a major malfunction at this early stage allows you to return the kitten before becoming emotionally attached.

 **CAUTION:** Kittens are not an ideal choice for households containing either very young children (under 6 years old) or the elderly. Children can injure kittens by holding them too tightly, and a young feline can deal out severe retaliatory injuries with its teeth and claws. Rambunctious kittens can also get under the feet of seniors or puncture their thin skin with playful attacks.