

The First 100 Days

Kitten Edition

Everything Doctor Agatha wishes someone had told her before her own adoption — grounded in guidance from the AAFP, AAHA, and Cornell Feline Health Center, with every claim traceable to its source.



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Adoption Day: The Safe-Room Strategy

DAY 1

Do not let your kitten loose in the whole house on day one. It feels welcoming to you; to a cat, it's the opposite. International Cat Care puts the underlying logic simply: cats are territorial, and their first priority in any new environment is establishing and understanding that territory before they can feel safe enough to eat, drink, rest, or use the litter box.¹ "The smaller and safer the space you can provide, the more they will feel secure — which will help them be more sociable with you."¹

Setting Up the Room

Pick one small, quiet, uncluttered room for the first week. Furnish it with at minimum: a litter box with unscented clumping litter, food and water (kept apart from the litter box), bedding, a few toys, and — critically — at least one hiding place.² A cracked-open carrier, a covered bed, or even a cardboard box all work.

DOCTOR AGATHA'S NOTE

Many newly adopted cats hide for the first few days, sometimes the whole first week.² This is not a bad sign. It is a cat doing exactly what a cat should do. Let her.

Meeting Resident Cats

If you already have cats at home, keep the newcomer fully separated until your veterinarian has examined them — especially if their health history is unknown.³ Slow, scent-first introductions over days to weeks go far better than a face-to-face meeting on day one. The full step-by-step process is in Chapter 03.

Adoption Day Checklist

- ☐ One quiet room set up before your kitten arrives, not after
- ☐ Litter box placed away from food and water
- ☐ At least one hiding spot available
- ☐ Resident cats kept separated until a vet visit clears the newcomer

☐ First vet appointment booked within the week

What the First Week Actually Looks Like

When	What to expect
Hours 1–24	Hiding is normal and expected. Sit quietly in the room; let your kitten choose when to emerge ²
Days 2–3	Short, calm visits — sit on the floor, let them approach, no forced handling
Days 3–7	Eating and using the litter box more confidently while you're in the room
End of week 1	If confident, begin supervised access to one additional room

What to Actually Buy

Category	What you need
Litter	At least 2 boxes for a single kitten (see Chapter 07), unscented clumping litter
Eating	Food and water bowls placed well away from the litter box; the exact food they were already eating
Hiding & resting	A covered bed or a simple cardboard box; a carrier they can retreat into
Vertical space	Even a small perch or clear shelf — see Chapter 09
Enrichment	A wand-style toy and a scratching post, introduced from day one