

KITTENS

Kitten Feeding Chart by Age: How Much and How Often

How much and how often to feed a kitten, from weaning at about 4 weeks to adult food at 1 year: a feeding chart by age, weaning step by step, wet or dry, growth checks and when to call a vet.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 24, 2026 • 5 min read • 16 cited sources

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How much and how often to feed a kitten

Kittens grow fast and have small stomachs, so they need food made for growth, several times a day. The ASPCA puts a kitten's energy needs at about two to three times an adult cat's. Feed a kitten food, three or four small meals a day at first and two by 6 months, and use the label for how much.

Under about 4 weeks old, kittens drink formula from a bottle: our [newborn kitten guide](#) has the bottle-feeding chart. Not sure how old a kitten is? Check the [kitten age chart](#).

Kitten feeding chart by age

WHAT TO FEED, AND HOW OFTEN, FROM BIRTH TO 1 YEAR

Age	What to feed	Meals a day	Good to know
Under 4 weeks	Kitten milk replacer, by bottle	7 at birth, down to 4–5 by 4 weeks	See the bottle-feeding chart .
4 to 5 weeks	Formula in a shallow dish, then a gruel of wet kitten food mixed with formula or water	About 4, each offered for about 30 minutes	Keep up the bottle until the kitten eats well on its own.
5 to 8 weeks	Wet kitten food, a little thicker each week; dry kitten food and water always out	3 to 4	Fully weaned by about 6 to 8 weeks. About 2 lb at 8 weeks.
2 to 6 months	Kitten food, wet, dry or both	3	Weigh regularly: growth should be steady.

Age	What to feed	Meals a day	Good to know
6 to 12 months	Kitten food	2	After spay/neuter, smaller portions, but still kitten food.
From about 1 year	Adult cat food	2	Full grown: switch to adult food.

Meals a day: Cornell Feline Health Center (three a day until 6 months, then two) and VCA (three to four small meals for young kittens). Weaning: Maddie's Fund, Kitten Lady and Best Friends. How much per meal comes from the kitten food's label for your kitten's weight, adjusted as it grows.

Weaning: 4 to 8 weeks

Weaning starts at about 3 to 5 weeks, the AAHA/AAFP guidelines say. Best Friends starts at about 4 weeks; Kitten Lady waits until about 5, once the back teeth are in. It takes from a few days to a few weeks, and kittens are fully weaned at about 6 to 8 weeks.

1. Offer formula on a spoon, then in a shallow saucer or flat dish, as Best Friends suggests.
2. Mix wet kitten food with formula or warm water, about two parts food to one part liquid, to the thickness of oatmeal (Maddie's Fund).
3. Offer the gruel about four times a day for about 30 minutes, then throw out what is left.
4. Use less liquid each day, until the kittens eat wet food as it comes.
5. Put out dry kitten food and a shallow bowl of water once they eat wet food well.
6. Keep bottle-feeding any kitten that is not eating enough from the dish, and weigh every kitten daily while weaning.

How much should a kitten eat?

Start with the feeding guide on the kitten food's label, for your kitten's weight, and split it into the day's meals. Then adjust to the kitten: VCA recommends regular weigh-ins and body checks, and steady growth rather than the fastest possible growth.

Calories per pound fall as a kitten grows. The AAHA/AAFP life-stage guidelines give about 200 calories per kilogram of body weight a day at 10 weeks (roughly 90 per pound), down to about 80 per kilogram (roughly 36 per pound) at 10 months.

The ASPCA suggests leaving dry food out for kittens to eat freely. VCA prefers measured meals, which make it easier to see how much each kitten eats. Either way, take up wet food after a meal.

Wet or dry food?

Either, as long as the label says it is complete and balanced for growth (or for all life stages). Wet food is at least 75% water and dry food about 6 to 10%, Cornell notes, so wet food helps kittens drink enough. Kitten Lady starts kittens on wet food and adds dry as they grow. Many owners feed both.

Clean, fresh water should be out at all times. Do not give cow's milk: the ASPCA and Cornell advise against it, because many cats cannot digest it well.

When to switch to adult food

At about 1 year. The AAHA nutrition guidelines and the ASPCA keep cats on a growth food until about 12 months, when they are full grown.

Spay or neuter lowers a kitten's energy needs. The vet nutritionists at Tufts suggest cutting portions by about 20 to 30% after surgery, while staying on kitten food until 1 year. More on timing in [when to spay or neuter a cat](#).

Is my kitten eating enough?

- Weight: about 2 pounds at 8 weeks. The [kitten age chart](#) has every week to 10 weeks.
- Gain: Maddie's Fund expects about 4 ounces a week in kittens of weaning age that eat enough.
- Shape: on the WSAVA body condition scale, a cat at the ideal score has ribs you can feel under a slight layer of fat and a visible waist.

When to call the vet

- A kitten that has gone 12 hours without eating. Cornell warns that for kittens under 6 weeks, even 12 hours without food can be life-threatening.
- Any weight loss.
- Diarrhea: always serious in kittens, Kitten Lady says. Bloody diarrhea is an emergency.
- Vomiting twice or more in a day, or vomit with blood in it.
- A kitten that is limp or hard to wake: go to an emergency vet now.

Foods kittens should never eat

From the ASPCA's list of people foods to keep away from pets: onions, garlic and chives (cats are more sensitive to them than dogs), chocolate and caffeine, alcohol, xylitol, salty snacks, and raw meat, raw eggs and bones. Skip cow's milk and other dairy too.

Treats should be no more than 10% of a kitten's daily food, as the AAHA and WSAVA guidelines advise for cats.

Quick answers

How often should I feed my kitten?

Three to four small meals a day for young kittens, three a day up to 6 months, then two a day from 6 months to 1 year (Cornell).

How much wet food should a kitten eat?

Follow the feeding guide on the kitten food label for your kitten's weight, split into the day's meals, and adjust so the kitten keeps gaining steadily.

When do kittens start eating food?

Weaning onto wet food starts at about 4 to 5 weeks. Most kittens eat solid food on their own by 6 to 8 weeks.

Can kittens eat adult cat food?

Not as their main food. Kittens need food labeled for growth or all life stages until about 1 year old.

Can kittens drink milk?

No cow's milk. Under 4 weeks they need kitten milk replacer; after weaning, water.

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