

FINDING THE *PURRRFECT* PEDIGREE KITTEN



When it comes to adding a new feline friend to your family, the decision of where to acquire your kitten is crucial. Buying your kitten from a responsible breeder is one step in getting off to the best possible start with your new family.

How do I decide on a breed?

Try to visit a cat show in your area. You can always find a calendar of shows being held, by going to the NZCF website (www.nzcf.com). While you are at the show, take the opportunity to talk to breeders of various breeds. Be sure to find out how much grooming each breed requires and whether the breed has any special needs or characteristics. Ask about the temperament, physical traits and behavioral traits as well as the health considerations for each breed. Cat books, cat magazines, and the internet are other good sources of information. If you haven't decided on a breed, or if the expense of a purebred kitten is beyond your current budget, please consider adopting a cat or kitten from a local shelter or SPCA. There are many lovely and loving cats in need of good homes. Plus, if you would like to join the fun of showing a cat, NZCF shows welcome non-pedigree cats to compete along with our classes of pedigree cats.

What can you expect from a registered breeder?

• Genetic Assurance

When you buy a kitten from a registered breeder, you can expect the breeder to conduct health screening for common genetic conditions specific to the breed, ensuring that the kittens are less likely to inherit hereditary diseases. By ensuring that breeding cats are tested and clear of certain hereditary diseases, it reduces the risk of health issues in the kittens. This proactive approach contributes to a longer, healthier life for your new pet.



• A healthy kitten

While no one can guarantee that your kitten will never have a medical problem, a responsible breeder's commitment to ethical and responsible breeding increases your chances of getting a healthy, well-adjusted kitten. To tell if your kitten is healthy, handle the kitten. It should have good muscle tone, a clean coat, and bright, clear eyes. The kitten should not be sneezing or sniffing. Its eyes should be free of discharge and its ears should be clean and pink inside. There should be no bald patches or signs of dry, flaky skin. We do suggest that you have your own vet examine the kitten within a few days of purchase to confirm its good health. A responsible breeder will be intensely interested in the welfare of your kitten and will encourage you to call whenever you have questions or concerns about your kitten.

• A well socialised kitten

Socialisation is a critical aspect of a kitten's early development, and registered breeders excel in this area. They facilitate positive interactions and encourage play and exploration. To tell if your kitten is well socialized, play with the kitten using a non-threatening toy such as a feather. After a period of normal caution, the kitten should relax and become friendly, active, and playful. Many perfectly friendly kittens would rather play than be held; however, after becoming acquainted with you, the kitten should let you hold it, at least for a short time. Remember, kittens have lots of energy to release!

• Registration Papers

When you get your kitten, you will receive its health/vaccination records and a written sales agreement. The kitten will come with pedigree documentation that verifies their lineage. After the kitten is desexed, the breeder will transfer the kitten into your name. After which the ownership papers will be sent to you from the New Zealand Cat Fancy. Having this documentation not only adds value to your pet but it will also be essential if you decide to participate in cat shows in the future.



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• **Breed Knowledge and Expertise Support and resources.**

Registered breeders can provide tailored advice based on their knowledge of a specific breed, helping owners manage any unique traits or needs their kitten may have.

When can I take the kitten home?

Most responsible breeders allow their kittens to go to new homes at 12 weeks of age or older. This is a perfect age to make the transition to a new home. At 12 weeks, a kitten is weaned, litter trained, and has been vaccinated at least once. Don't worry, it still has plenty of comical, lovable kittenhood to go!

What should I do after I bring the kitten home?

When you bring your kitten home, make sure you follow the breeder's instructions carefully. Making the transition to a new home can be very stressful for any cat. Changes in food, water, litter, and overall environment can cause minor ailments, even in healthy cats. Speak to your breeder about how to prevent any problems.

Why is the breeder asking me questions?

Don't be offended if the breeder asks you questions. The breeder is not trying to embarrass or intimidate you; they are simply trying to determine whether their

Questions to Ask

1. What are the characteristics of this breed?

A responsible breeder will be happy to discuss the breed's characteristics and special requirements with you. Some breeds require more grooming than others. Some are more active or vocal. Others may be shy or aloof. Be sure you discuss not only the breed's characteristics with the breeder, but also the personalities of individual kittens. Choose the right breed and kitten for your lifestyle and personal preferences.

2. Do you provide a written sales agreement that includes a health guarantee?

NZCF recommends their breeder sell kittens with a written contract that includes a health guarantee. If your breeder has this, make sure you both understand the terms of this guarantee.

Most responsible breeders provide a free pet medical insurance. NZCF highly recommends Pet insurance for all your pets.

3. What diseases and conditions does your health guarantee cover?

A responsible breeder will vaccinate the kitten at least once against panleukopenia, calicivirus, and herpesvirus. (the exact vaccines given will depend on the region) Be clear about who is responsible for conditions or other illnesses that might arise.

4. How are the kittens raised?

A responsible breeder puts careful thought and much care into raising healthy, outgoing kittens, and will be happy to discuss their methods with you.

5. Can you provide references from people who have purchased kittens?

kitten will have the "forever" home they would want for it. They are striving to find the best possible home for each kitten.

What about the pet overpopulation problem?

A responsible breeder is acutely aware of the vast numbers of unwanted cats and kittens, and breeds for quality rather than quantity. Breeding a cat with less than ideal "show conformation" can add to the unwanted pets problem and degrades the overall quality of the breed. Please don't feel that you can offset the cost of the kitten by having "just one litter." Have all your pets desexed!

What do I feed my kitten?

A complete and balanced diet formulated for your kitten's specific life stage is essential. Proper nutrition helps them develop and maintain strong bones; ideal body condition; thick, lustrous coat; bright eyes and healthy teeth. A malnourished cat is more susceptible to disease, infection and health problems. PRO PLAN recognizes that your kitten will have special needs at specific times. That's why there's a PRO PLAN food to meet each life stage, with all the necessary vitamins, minerals, protein and other nutrients in proper amounts.



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