

Emergencies:

knowing what to do

Kittens are curious, playful and fearless: your new companion is going to make you deal with situations where it is going to be important to know what to do and what decisions to make. Here are some pieces of advice to help you cope with the most common emergencies.



Dangers at home

Your home is a haven of peace for your kitten, but it can hide many a danger all the same. Your kitten does not necessarily have to go out to run risks.

Ovens, washing machine drums or spin dryers are amusing hiding places as long as no-one closes the door...

Sewing threads are toys that remind a kitten of snakes but, instead of a forked tongue, they have needles at the end: Ouch!

Climbing on to shelves and bookcases is good fun; but making sure that no vases or books, or kittens fall off is a whole different ballgame!

Playing at free-fall from the balcony can, depending on which floor you live, end in a crash-landing of greater or lesser severity.

Certain beautiful indoor plants are most tempting, just waiting to be nibbled: poinsettias, azaleas, diffenbachias, for example but they can cause serious poisoning.



Outdoor life

● **Who will cry at home if your kitten gets lost and cannot find the way back?**

● Cars and motorbikes are, sad to say, only too real as dangers.

● You never know who will be around the next corner: an alley cat who tolerates no strangers on its patch, or a dog on the prowl?

● Is your kitten aware of the fact that wasps sting, especially when a paw comes down fast as lightning to pin them to the ground?

● **Be careful:** in the garden, pesticides and weed-killers smell unpleasant so in theory your kitten

should keep away from them. Conversely poison for rats, slugs and snails can interest your pet. In the garage, antifreeze apparently has a pleasant taste. Beware: poison!

Infection

● Being young, your kitten is susceptible to infectious diseases, especially of the stomach and intestines. Parasites, viruses or bacteria may cause vomiting and diarrhoea attacks. In the most serious cases, they can lead to severe dehydration and death in a matter of hours. In less severe cases, withholding food for 12 hours but with water constantly available, may be all the treatment that is necessary. Fasting should not be prolonged. *If your kitten's condition worsens or the symptoms persist, you should consult your vet.*



Poisoning

● **Never leave any kind of poison** within reach, such as slug-bait or rodent poisons, which are real treats for your kitten. If it does swallow any, do not wait for the first symptoms to set in; take it straight to the vet. Don't forget to take the box or packaging with you as knowledge of the active ingredients can help the vet to select the most appropriate treatment. Giving it milk to drink is of no use. If you store liquids such as oil, petrol or diesel, keep the containers covered so that your kitten cannot fall in. If such a thing does happen, wash it with large amounts of water to get as much as possible out of the fur,

then take it to the vet. In case of convulsions, it is of no use to talk to your cat and stroke it: any such stimuli can only help prolong the attack. Watch over it to make sure it does not get hurt, and try to keep it away from noise and light. There is no point in trying to get hold of its tongue: there is no danger of it swallowing it, and you might get bitten.



Electrocution

- Never let your kitten play with electric wires: biting them could electrocute it. Wherever possible turn power off at the mains.

Electrocution would cause burns to the face, shock, breathing problems or even death.

Take it to the vet as quickly as possible, even if it seems to be unaffected at first.



Insect bites/stings and snake bites

● Insect bites/stings cause swelling and occasionally an allergic reaction. This is usually seen as swelling of the paws or face, although internal swelling may also result in breathing difficulties. Try to extract the sting with tweezers if you can see it, and take your kitten to see the vet, who may administer an anti-inflammatory treatment to help settle the allergic reaction. In case of a snake bite, there is no point in trying to get the wound to bleed by pressing on it or by using a tourniquet: the right

thing to do is to take your kitten for treatment as quickly as possible.



Heat-stroke

Do not leave your kitten in the car, especially in summer, as the inside temperature in the sun can reach 70°C, causing acute dehydration and possibly fatal heat-stroke. And remember: the sun “goes round” and a car in the shade may be in the sun a few hours later. Just leaving the windows ajar is not usually enough to keep the temperature cool. When a kitten does get heat stroke, it suddenly takes on a strange attitude, meowing, losing balance and breathing fast. You should give it a shower with plenty of cold water then take it to the vet.





Trauma

● *Your kitten may suffer an injury: be hit by a car, bitten by a dog, or even fall out of a window. You should handle the kitten with care, in a horizontal position if possible: there may be a spinal injury, and you must avoid aggravating this by too much handling.*

Ensure that the mouth is not obstructed by blood or saliva or by foreign material such as sand or earth, and that the kitten can breathe freely. If a wound is bleeding profusely, press on it with a finger or a cloth, in order to stem the flow and encourage clotting. If a leg is broken and

you can see the bone through the skin do not touch it but cover it with a clean cloth to minimise the chance of infection. Finally, even if your kitten appears unharmed after an accident, consult your vet all the same, as serious internal damage is still a possibility.