

# FINDING THE *PURRFECT* PEDIGREED *KITTEN*



**B**ringing a new pet into your family involves a long-term commitment of time, energy, and money. Buying your kitten from a knowledgeable breeder is one step in getting off to the best possible start with your new family.

## ***What can you expect from a knowledgeable breeder?***

When you buy a kitten from a knowledgeable breeder, you can expect the breeder to guarantee that your kitten is in good health but suggest that you have your own veterinarian examine your kitten within a few days of purchase to confirm its good health. You will be required to have your kitten spayed or neutered at an appropriate age. Some breeders will have already done this for you! You will be required to sign a sales agreement to outline the conditions of releasing the kitten to your care. Finally, a knowledgeable breeder will be intensely interested in the welfare of your kitten and encourage you to call whenever you have questions or concerns about your kitten.



## ***How can you 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.

## ***How can I tell if a kitten is well socialized?***

Play with the kitten using a nonthreatening toy such as a feather or ribbon. 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. When a cat or kitten puts its tail up, it is a way of showing they are confident and relaxed. Remember, kittens have lots of energy to release!

## ***When can I take the kitten home?***

Most knowledgeable 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 12-16



weeks based on assessment of the breeder and their veterinarian. A kitten is weaned, litter trained, and has been vaccinated at least twice. Don't worry, it still has plenty of comical, lovable kitten-hood to go!

### ***Will I receive the kitten's "papers"?***

When you get your kitten, you will receive its health/vaccination record and a written sales agreement. After you have the kitten altered and send the breeder a veterinarian's certificate of neutering or spaying, the breeder will send you the kitten's registration form. You should also receive a pedigree for the kitten. To register the kitten, you fill out the registration form and send it with the proper fee to the appropriate registering association.

### ***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.

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

## **Questions to Ask**

### **1. What are the characteristics of this breed?**

A knowledgeable 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?**

A knowledgeable breeder sells a kitten only with a written contract that includes a health guarantee. It may be 72-hours or may be longer. Make sure you both understand the terms of this guarantee.

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

A knowledgeable breeder will vaccinate the kitten at least twice against panleukopenia, calicivirus, and rhinotracheitis. 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 from you?**

### ***Why buy from a knowledgeable breeder?***

While no one can guarantee that your kitten will never have a medical problem, a knowledgeable breeder's commitment to ethical/responsible breeding increases your chances of getting a healthy, well-adjusted kitten.

### ***What about the cats in shelters?***

A knowledgeable breeder is acutely aware of the vast numbers of unwanted cats and kittens, and they breed for strict quality, temperament and good health, rather than quantity. Most pedigreed cat breeders are involved with their local shelter and rescues, providing donations, to making adoption space available at the local cat show. Please don't feel you can offset the cost of the kitten by having "just one litter." The cost involved with even one litter can be many hundreds of dollars.

### ***How do I decide on a breed?***

Try to visit a cat show in your community. You can always find a calendar of shows being held, all over TICA's world, by going to the TICA site ([www.tica.org](http://www.tica.org)). 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 have any special needs or characteristics. 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 pedigreed kitten is beyond your current budget, please consider adopting a cat or kitten from a local shelter. 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, TICA shows welcome non-pedigreed cats to compete along with our classes of pedigreed cats.

