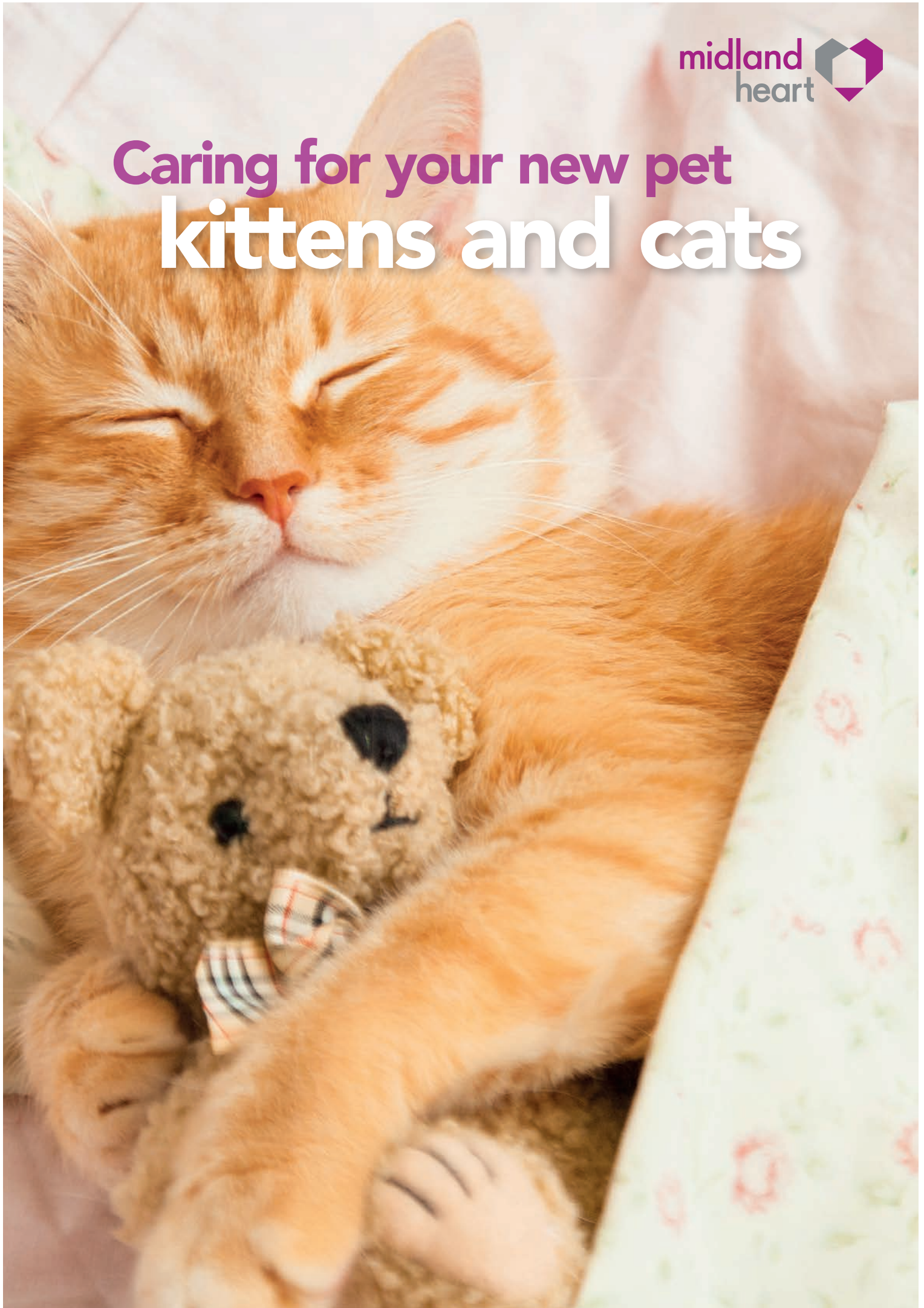
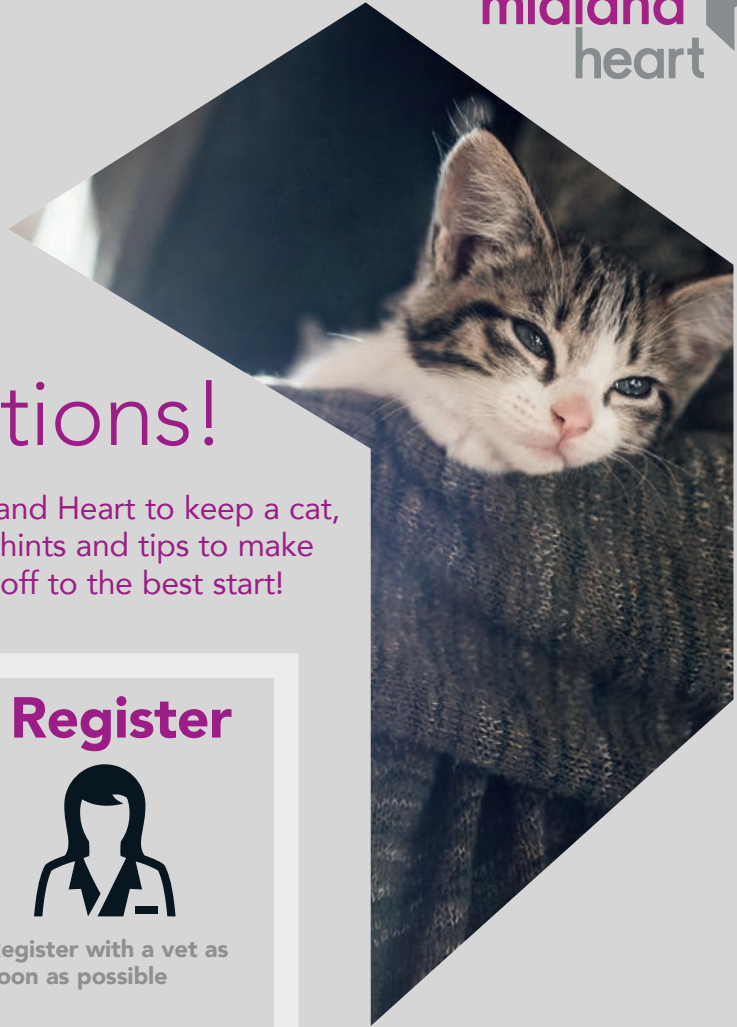


Caring for your new pet kittens and cats





Congratulations!

You have permission from Midland Heart to keep a cat, so what's next? Here are a few hints and tips to make sure you and your new pet get off to the best start!

Kittens



Kittens should stay with their mother until at least 8 weeks

Register



Register with a vet as soon as possible

Insure



Take out pet insurance for peace of mind

Identify



Use microchipping or a collar and ID tag so your pet is easy to identify

Vaccinate



Get your cat vaccinated to keep them healthy

Neuter



Neuter or spay your cat to stop it from breeding

Groom



Make sure your cat is litter trained and well groomed

Play



Keep your cat entertained so they are happy and healthy





Getting started

Kittens should always stay with their mother until they are at least 8 weeks old. This is essential to their development and avoids problems in the future. Never accept a kitten that is less than 8 weeks old, always use a reputable breeder and seek professional advice if you have any questions.



Veterinary care

It's a good idea to register your new pet with a vet as soon as possible. Vets offer a number of important services, including vaccinations, microchipping, neutering and spaying and treatment if your pet is ill. Registering with your local vet is easy and can often be done online.



Pet insurance

It can be very upsetting when your pet is unwell, and worrying about paying for treatment only makes the situation more stressful. Pet insurance is relatively inexpensive and can cover many common treatments and procedures, giving you peace of mind and one less thing to worry about.

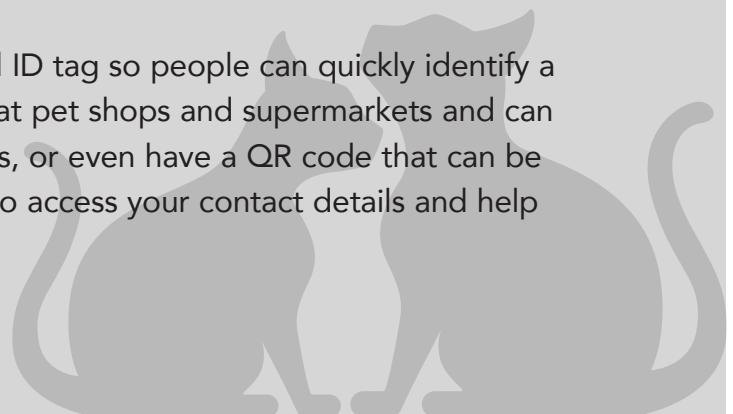
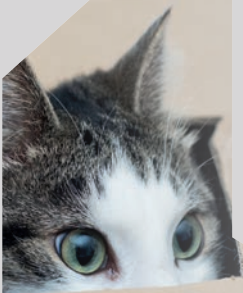
Pet insurance can be set up easily online, or at your local bank or supermarket. Insurance plans offer different levels of cover so make sure you read the small print thoroughly before signing up.



Identification

It is important that your new pet is easy to identify if it is lost or strays away from home. Microchipping your pet is a cheap, safe and easy way to help identify them if they are lost. A tiny electronic device, about the size of a grain of rice, is put under your pet's skin. If your pet gets lost, they can be taken to any vet where they will scan the chip to find your details and return your pet home safely.

You can also buy a collar and ID tag so people can quickly identify a lost pet. These are available at pet shops and supermarkets and can be engraved with your details, or even have a QR code that can be scanned with a smartphone to access your contact details and help return your pet to you.





Vaccinations

To make sure your new pet lives a long, healthy and happy life it is important to make sure they get the regular vaccinations they need. To boost their immune system, kittens need important vaccinations at 9 weeks and 3 months old, followed by regular boosters. Your vet will give you more information and recommend any extra vaccinations that may be beneficial.

Did you know?

Cats can be vaccinated against:

- Cat flu (Feline herpes virus and feline calicivirus)
- Feline infectious enteritis
- Feline Leukaemia virus



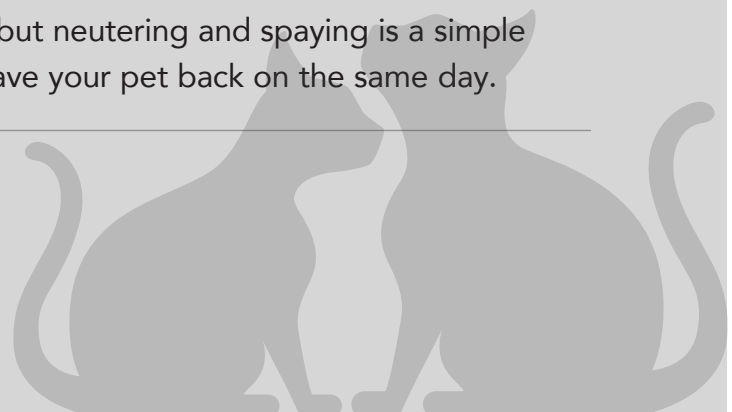
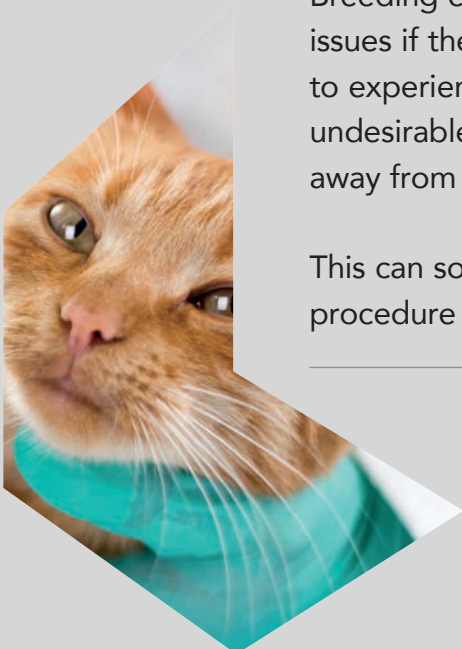
Neutering and spaying

You must not allow your new pet to breed. This is a breach of the conditions in your permission letter and can be very stressful for your pet. Kittens can be very destructive, so having 8 more of them running round would be really hard work!

Kittens can breed from 4 months old, which can be dangerous for their health, so it is important to get them neutered or spayed as soon as possible. Your vet will be able to give you more information and advice, and Cats Protection, a registered UK charity, can provide vouchers to bring the cost down to as low as just five pounds.

Breeding can be very stressful for a female cat and can cause serious issues if they don't receive the right care. Breeding should be left to experienced breeders. Neutering male cats also helps stop undesirable behaviours, like spraying to mark their territory or straying away from home.

This can sound a little scary, but neutering and spaying is a simple procedure and you should have your pet back on the same day.





Grooming

Although cats are used to keeping themselves clean, long haired cats sometimes need a bit of help removing hair that gets matted up. You can get a pet comb or brush from your local pet shop that will help your cat feel a little more comfortable and avoid matting. Short-haired cats can benefit from this too, especially in the summer months when cats often molt their winter coat.



Keeping your cat entertained

It's important that your cat has access to an outdoor space as they enjoy 'hunting' activities – this often means chasing leaves or blown grass rather than mice or rats. Cats chasing and stalking while playing releases endorphins, feel good hormones that keep your cat happy and healthy. It is important for your cat's development that they are allowed to play regularly to keep them stimulated.

Keeping your cat amused with toys indoors can also help keep them happy, provide exercise and strengthen your bond with your cat. Toys don't have to be expensive. A cardboard box with holes cut into it provides a fun hiding place. Even a ball of tin foil makes a perfectly good toy, as long as the cat cannot swallow it.

You can get involved too, using fishing rod toys with feathers on a string to mimic their prey! Remember to let them catch and 'kill' the toy to avoid frustration. Older cats will happily play three or four times a day, and younger cats ten times a day or more. Swap toys around regularly to keep them interesting, but don't leave your cat unattended with toys which could be shredded and eaten or cause entanglement.

A scratching post gives exercise, is good for their claws and will help protect your furniture too! Cats like to stretch and scratch after they wake up so it's best to position the scratch post near where they sleep.



Useful contacts for further support

Cats Protection
www.cats.org.uk
03000 12 12 12

Citizens Advice Bureau
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
03444 111 444

Midland Heart
www.midlandheart.org.uk
0345 60 20 540

PDSA
www.pdsa.org.uk
0800 731 2502

RSPCA
www.rspca.org.uk/home
0300 123 0346
(Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

