

NEW KITTEN MEMO

I know you are absolutely going to LOVE your baby(ies). You may have to remind yourself that they are babies and they are rambunctious. It is just like raising a child. Kittens go through stages just like children do. The good news is that those stages will pass quickly and as they become an adult, their energy level and appetite will level off.

The first thing you need to do is baby-proof your home. Crawl around on your hands and knees and make sure that there are no chokeables on the floor. Kittens will put anything into their mouths. Be especially careful with string, yarn, dental floss and ribbon on presents. I have known more than one person that has had to have their cat or kitten operated on because they ate ribbon off a present. I actually had my 7 year old birman knock over the bathroom garbage can while we were on vacation and she ate a piece of dental floss. It cost me \$800 to figure out what it was and to have it surgically removed and that was 10 years ago. I keep all of my garbage cans at home behind closed doors. Electrical cords should be hidden as best as possible and not laying out for the kitten to play with. If they bite a cord, they could get electrocuted and die. And houseplants are the one of the most common and preventable killers for cats and kittens, so make sure you do not have any poisonous plants in your home.

Here is a reminder of my very important NOs:

- **NO Declawing:** The reason we do not declaw our cats or kittens is because there is no need to and it is a very painful and inhumane amputation. They are actually amputating the feline's digits at the knuckle, not just taking out a claw. The procedure is outlawed in a lot of countries and will hopefully be outlawed here soon. Declawing can leave your feline with constant phantom pain where their digits have been amputated and this can lead to bad potty issues and even change their personality. They can become withdrawn and/or aggressive. My babies are taught to use their scratching posts and cat trees to scratch on.
- **NO Letting Kitty Outside:** Outside is a very dangerous place for our cats and kittens. So even if you train your cat to walk with a harness and a collar, I still say NO. If you teach your cat or kitten that it is fun to be outside, then every time you come home or leave they are going to race to the door and try to get out. If someone accidentally leaves a door open, your cat or kitten could be gone before you realized it. But if you do not ever take them outside and a door is left open they will not bolt for it because they are a bit scared and unsure. They may even walk away from it. Siberians are perfectly happy sitting in an open window or in front of an open patio door. There is no good reason to take them outside.
- **NO Collars:** This is an obvious choking or strangulation hazard. But even if the collars are break away, they do not always break open as they should and a cat or kitten could still potentially strangle themselves wearing one. And since your cat or kitten is not ever going outside, there is absolutely no need or reason for a collar.

The next thing you want to do is to go shopping. This is the fun part! Here are the items you will need:

1. **Large Covered Litter Box(es).** The rule for litter boxes is that you have one box per cat. If you have two cats, you need two litter boxes. The reason you want a large, covered litter box is because your baby is going to get big. When fully grown, boys have a tendency to not sit down enough when they pee and if you don't have a covered box, they can end up peeing outside and over the top of their box. If your litter box is covered, and they pee too high, it will just hit the back of the box and not your wall. Not all boys do this, but I have had that happen. The babies are used to having a covered litter box at my house, so if you get one, it will be familiar to them. Girls don't have the problem of peeing over the box, but they will throw litter all over the place when they try to cover up the present they left! A covered box will help to keep the litter in the box and not on your floor. I have found that the top entry litter boxes work the best. Cats like them because they feel safe while in them and they help reduce the amount of litter tracked out of the box and on your floor. I have both top entry and front entry boxes at my home, so your kitten will be used to using both. Below are some options.

A. At Petsmart on line or in store are the Nature's Miracle boxes. These are the largest boxes I have found and my favorites. The first is the Nature's Miracle Advanced Hooded Cat Litter Box and the second is Nature's Miracle Top Entry Litter Box. As of right now, these are not offered on Amazon and can only be purchase at Petsmart, but hopefully in time that will change.



B. At Chewy or Amazon, Petmate Jumbo Deluxe Hooded Litter Pan and Petmate Top Entry Litter Pan :



2. **Clumpable Cat litter.** I recommend Tidy Cat Scoopable. You can get it at most grocery stores, but it is cheaper at K-Mart, Wal-Mart and Target. Make sure you have enough litter in the box for them to dig. You need to fill the box so there is at least 3 inches of litter. If you read the litter container, you will see they recommend dumping the entire box on a regular basis. If you only have one or two cats, this only needs to be done every 3 to 4 months. You will be able to tell when the litter is getting old because it stops clumping. I highly recommend cleaning your litter box daily. If the box gets too full, your kitty may choose to potty somewhere else. They don't like the smell of a full and dirty litter box any more than we do. You can get 35 pounds for \$12.98 at Walmart.



3. **Litter Genie Cat Litter Disposal System.** This is the best thing ever invented for disposing of your cat waste. It works like a Diaper Genie. You scoop the waste into the Litter Genie, pull back the trap door and let it drop and then let go and the trap door closes so you have no odor. You keep filling the Litter Genie until it is full and then you just tear off the bag, knot it and throw it in the garbage. When you run out of the bags, you just buy a refill and replace the empty one. This product makes it very easy to store and dispose of your kitty waste. You can buy the Litter Genie the cheapest at Chewy.com. Just follow the link: <http://www.chewy.com/cat/litter-genie-plus-cat-litter/dp/47563>.



4. **Cat Toys.** People do not realize how important it is to play with your cat/kitten and to keep them mentally and physically stimulated. I have seen many stories on Animal Planet's show *My Cat From Hell* where aggression and potty problems were cured by simply playing with the cat. You should spend about 30 to 45 minutes a day playing with your kitty. Siberians are also like kids in that they get sick and/or bored with their toys after a while, so it is a good idea to switch them out every so often. If you can rotate your kitties toys, that will keep them happy and active. They need to be challenged in play just like human children do. So below is a list of the tried and true and all of my cats' FAVORITE must-have toys and where you can get them. Some of them are offered at quite a few different places on line, so you can put the name of the toy in and then search for where you can get it the cheapest. I send a dragonfly cat toy and a play cube with all my kittens as those are must haves.

A. Da Bird Cat Toy (Amazon.com and Petco)



B. Dragonfly (www.dragonflycattoys.com)



C. Turbo Scratcher (Petco)



D. Tunnel (Petco)



E. Cube (Walmart)



F. Cat Crazies (Revival Animal Health)



G. Furry Mice (Walmart)



H. Soft Toys for Teething (Walmart)



I. Cat's Meow (Walgreens & Petsmart)



J. Scooter Balls (Petco)



K. Smart Cat Peek A Prize (Petco)



L. Sparkle or Glitter Balls (Amazon)



5. **Cat Food Bowls.** You need to get your kitten food bowls. **DO NOT GET PLASTIC.** Plastic dishes give cats cat acne and it is hard to get rid of once you have it. I have never had it because I have never used plastic bowls, but I have seen it on other cats. It looks like black dots on their chin and around their mouth. You want to get silver stainless steel or ceramic bowls. For the wet food, a small ceramic bowl would be best. One other note is that you want to make sure that the bowl is not too deep. A cat's whiskers are very sensitive and they do not like to eat from a bowl that they have to push their face down into to get at the food. That is why most cat dishes are very shallow. Siberians never drink enough water and I have found over the years that they prefer to drink running water out of the sink. They like moving water better than water that just sits in the bowl, which is why the kitty water fountains are so popular. If you get a kitty fountain, make sure it is made out of stainless steel or ceramic and not plastic. I found everything listed below at Drs. Foster & Smith at <http://www.drsofostersmith.com/>.



If the bowls are flat on the ground, I would suggest getting a placement to set the bowls on.



Ceramic or Stainless Steel Water Fountains:



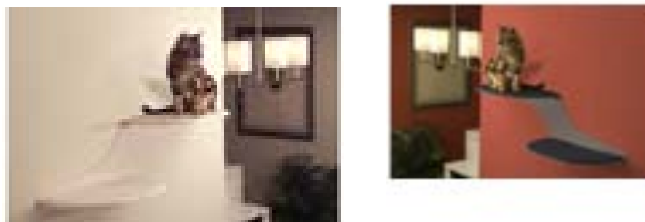
6. **Scratching Post/Cat Trees.** You are going to need a scratching post. It can be rope or carpet. My cats have never liked the cardboard ones, but some cats do like them. A good scratching post is a must-have so your baby learns not to scratch your furniture. Their mom teaches them how to use their scratching post when they are very young and I think a lot of it is instinct. If you see your baby scratch on a piece of furniture, take them away, very sternly say NO and put their paws on their scratching post. They will get the idea. You can get a nice carpeted stand up post at K-Mart for under \$15.00 which will be fine while your baby is a kitten. As your cat grows, you are going to need to make sure their scratching post grows too. A good cat tree is an essential purchase. Cats need to be able to stand on their two bag legs and stretch out their entire body to the tops of their front paws while they scratch. If they are not able to do this their scratching post is too small and you need to get a taller one.



The best solution to the problem of your kitty outgrowing its scratching post is to buy your kitten a large cat tree. It not only serves as a scratching post, but Siberians love to sleep high off the ground, so when it comes to cat trees the taller the better. There are a couple websites I can recommend that have really cool and well-made cat trees. One of them is called the *Cat Tree Shop*. They offer the ability to see different vendors. Below are trees found at the Cat Tree Shop site. www.pussicat.com is nice because you can custom design your cat tree to fit your room and/or needs. You can get cat trees cheaper online and at K-Mart and Walmart, but expect them to only last about a year.



If you really want to spoil your cat, you can get shelves that mount on the wall so they can climb. If you google “cat shelves” you will find a lot to choose from.



7. **Cat Beds.** Cats first choice for sleeping is always going to be in bed with you. But they do need a place to sleep when you are gone. They prefer beds with high sides or the big pillow type. All of the beds shown below can be purchased at www.chewy.com.



8. **Cat Carrier.** You are also going to need a cat carrier and a blanket, towel or pad to put inside the carrier to take your baby home and for routine vet visits. I would not buy a kitten-sized carrier because your baby is going to grow fast. I would get an adult sized carrier so you do not have to buy two of them. And please stay away from cloth or netting carriers with Velcro because the cats can get out of them very easily. They are not safe. A hard plastic

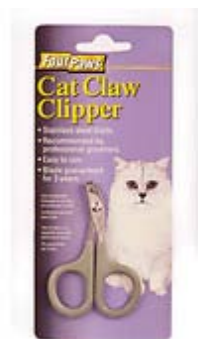
carrier or a Sturdi-Carrier which is soft but has zippers instead of Velcro, is the best. You can find the Sturdi-Carrier at <http://sturdiproducts.com/pages/pet-carriers>.



9. **Cat Comb.** It is really smart to invest in a good cat comb. Greyhound combs are the best because they work great on cats and are virtually indestructible. I use them to comb cat hair off of just about everything. They work great to get the hair off cat trees, cat beds and furniture. They are also nice for mats because one side has wide teeth and the other has narrow teeth. You use the wide end to break the mat apart and then the fine end to comb it out. The cheapest place to get your Greyhound comb is on Amazon. Search for *Pet 7-1/2-Inch Steel Grooming Comb (65730)* and you can find them for under \$10. Now if you have a severe matting problem (especially with the creams), I recommend you get a *FURminator Long Hair deShedding Edge For Cats*. **If the matting is too close to the skin for the Furminator to work, or if there are too many mats, please take you cat in to a professional cat groomer to have them removed.** I don't think most people realize how much pain your cat is in if they have mats. Imagine someone pulling your hair really hard and not letting go, ever! That is what a mat feels like to a cat. Matting can make a cat lethargic because it hurts to move and can change their disposition. If you want to teach young children how to groom their cat, the best thing to use is a Zoom Groom. Cat's love this tool because it is soft and does not hurt their skin. It feels more like a massage than a combing. You can get the furminator and zoom groom at www.chewy.com.



10. **Nail Clippers.** You should clip your cat's nails every four to six weeks. You can tell when they are getting too long because the cats paws will start to stick on carpet and fabric. You want to clip where the nail is curving so that it is straight again. You need to be careful not to cut too close to the quick or it may bleed a bit. Normally this is a two person job. Cats are not fond of nail trimming so it helps if one person holds them while the other one does the clipping. Below are the nail clippers I recommend from www.chewy.com.



11. **Tooth Brush.** I highly recommend getting a kitty toothbrush and getting your kitten used to it right away. It will save you so much money in vet bills if you brush their teeth, even if it is just once a week. Dental cleaning on cats is the most expensive procedure you will likely face as a cat owner. And if you start brushing your kitten's teeth, they will tolerate it well as an adult. My cats love the *C.E.T. Enzymatic Tartar Control Toothpaste* which is formulated for cats, has no foaming agents and comes in several flavors. My cats like the beef and poultry flavors. You also want to find a very soft toothbrush. If it is hard and stiff, it will hurt their gums when you brush and they will not tolerate it. I use an infant toothbrush. The other thing that I highly recommend which is easier than brushing is to use an oral plaque reducer. There are several oral sprays for cats on the market, but I like and use *Dr. George's Plaque Blast*. You actually mix the ingredients when you get it so the enzymes are fresh and work better. And my cats love the taste and think they are getting a treat when I spray it on their teeth. It will help to reduce existing plaque and also help so that plaque does not build up in the first place. You can find the toothpaste at www.chewy.com and the plaque blast at www.amazon.com.



12. **Cat Treats.** The only treat you should ever give you cat is 100% freeze dried meat, fish or poultry (with no additives or preservatives). Below are my house favorites, which can be purchased on www.chewy.com. Orijen treats are the best because they combine different protein sources in their treats. Where 100% freeze dried chicken, fish or beef is not bad, Orijen's Regional Red treats have wild boar liver, lamb liver, beef liver, boneless wild boar, boneless lamb, boneless beef. Orijen's Tundra has boneless venison, elk liver, boneless elk, venison liver, boneless quail, and steelhead trout. And Orijen's original treats have chicken liver, turkey liver, boneless chicken, boneless turkey, and boneless flounder. So there is nothing wrong with 100% freeze dried treats, but you are getting more bang for your buck if you go with Orijen's treats and they are actually better for Siberians because of the numerous protein sources. See my Safe Cat Food List for more information on treats.



13. **Food.** Last, but definitely not least, you will need to get food. I will be sending you my SAFE CAT FOOD LIST, but still want to address this subject in this memo. What you are feeding your cat is probably the most important decision you will make. The quality of food that you feed your kitten will affect its life expectancy and health more than anything else. Siberians are very different from cats found in the United States. They need higher amounts of protein (meat only) and moisture and should never have a food with grain or high amounts of fruits and vegetables. Siberians are and will always will be carnivores (meat eaters) and need to be fed as such. High quality wet and/or raw food is the only appropriate diet for this breed. You will not be able to purchase this type of cat food at K-Mart, Target, Walmart or grocery store. And you will most likely not be able to find a lot of it at Petco or Petsmart either. Your best options for purchasing your cat food would be to find a small mom and pop shop near you that will order exactly what

you need or to go online to a website such as www.chewy.com or www.petfooddirect.com and order from them. If you order \$50 the shipping is free, so that makes it very convenient. That is what most of my kitten owners do.

Dry food is really not good for cats, but I do put Orijen Cat & Kitten or Orijen Regional Red so they have something to nibble on when their wet food bowl is empty. This dry food has a very high protein level and quality ingredients. There is no other dry food on the market that can even compare to Orijen. Siberians tend to not drink enough water so a diet of dry food only is not good for their health. Wet food provides some liquids in addition to the water they do drink and more protein. In the wild, when cats eat a mouse they are getting 70% moisture with that meal. Dry food provides no additional liquids. Insufficient moisture and liquids in your Siberian's diet will most likely result in a lot of urinary tract infections and can form crystals in their urinary tract. These crystals can be deadly if they are not caught in time. I truly believe (as with humans) that we are what we eat. If you feed your baby inappropriate cat food, you will cut down on the life expectancy of your pet and end up incurring expensive vet bills. Bear in mind that a lot of really bad cat food is expensive, so do not think if you are paying more, you are getting better food. You have to read the ingredients and know what you are looking at.

Your baby is eating a variety of moist food (cans and pouches) because that is what is going to make them the healthiest. And because they are eating very high quality moist foods, there is no reason the food has to be labeled for "kittens". Low grade foods will do this and add calories, but high quality foods already have an appropriate amount of meat protein, so there is no need for a special food for kittens.

I have spent the last seven years extensively researching the best possible diet for our Siberians. This quest is never ending because of constant change. Big pet food companies are buying out smaller quality companies and changing the formula of their food, I have to keep up with any and all recalls and there are constantly new foods being added to the market. I purchased a membership to a group called *Truth About Pet Foods*. This helps me to stay on top of what is happening to and with our cat food. Big pet food companies can afford big marketing campaigns, but don't be fooled by a commercial or add in a magazine. Blue Buffalo for example is not a good food, yet everyone thinks it is because of their marketing campaigns. Read the label and know what you are looking for and what you don't want to see. That is the only way to truly determine if a food is good or bad.

My SAFE CAT FOOD list will tell you what kind of food to buy for your Siberian. And again, this list is constantly changing. To make my list, the food has to be safe and not contain any red flag ingredients or carcinogens (e.g., carrageenan, animal fat, canola oil or any by product meal), no gluten, artificial colors, flavors or preservatives, no corn, wheat soy or meat by-products and be grain free. It also means they have the appropriate amounts of real meat and protein that the Siberian breed requires. Some pet food companies use ingredients to raise their protein level that do not contain meat. One example would be to add vegetable protein. Vegetable proteins can be derived from corn, rice, wheat, oatmeal, rye, wheat germ, beet pulp and peas to list a few. And the pet food industry has even come up with a man-made ingredient that raises their protein level in food called DL-Methionine. That is something you never want to see in your cat's food. Proteins are the building blocks in animal nutrition and one of the most important nutrients in our cats' diet. And the more real protein sources a food has, the better it is for our cats.

The other criteria required to make my SAFE CAT FOOD LIST is that my cats have to actually want to eat the food. No matter how expensive or good a food is, it will not do you any good if you are throwing it away every day because your cat will not eat it.

People sometimes shy away from moist cat food because they think it will be an inconvenience. They think they have to pick it up in an hour, refrigerate it and then warm it back up before they put it out again. I have never done this. For the past 20 years I have put down my canned food and I leave it until their next meal. There is no possible way it is going to go bad in that amount of time. I put down a fresh bowl in the morning and then at dinner time I pick it up and put down a fresh bowl for their dinner. And that stays out until the next morning. This makes it very easy and convenient to feed canned or moist food.

How much canned food should they get? When you get home with your baby, I would feed them about 1/2 of a 5.5 oz can in the morning and 1/2 a can at night or a 3 ounce can or pouch in the morning and a 3 ounce can or pouch at night. When they finish that at one sitting and look up at you as if to say . . . that is all, you know it is time to give them more. They should never walk away from an empty bowl. Siberian adolescents will eat much more than adult Siberians because they are growing so fast and they need the calories and nutrition. Once they hit about 18 months, their appetites will start to taper off and as full grown adults, they will eat about the same amount they did when you brought them home as babies. People often call or e-mail me and say they think their Siberian is eating too much. The Siberian appetite is not what we are used to for our American cats. These cats have huge appetites while they are growing and they do not get fat. Although they grow very fast, they actually take up to 5 years to mature, but their appetites decrease way before then.

Please do not let your vet tell you your Siberian is fat and you should put them on a diet. They will and should gain weight from year 1 to year 2, and from year 2 to year 3. Our vets are not used to seeing that. If your vet disagrees with you on weight, tell them to do some research on Siberians and to look at the standard in CFA or TICA. The Siberian body is supposed to be shaped like a barrel. Think of how round a root beer barrel is and that is exactly what your Siberian's torso should look like. And many Siberians will also develop a tummy pouch. It was used to store food when they had to survive in Siberia and their meals were few and far between. Most vets have never seen a Siberian and have no idea what their caloric needs are or how they are supposed to be shaped. Again, this breed is extremely different from their American counterparts. So if your vet feels a belly pouch or says he can't feel their ribs and they need to go on a diet, either ignore them or educate them. I have never seen a fat Siberian and doubt I ever will. They are very good at regulating how much food they need and they will not overeat.

With that being said, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE FEEDING ADVICE FROM YOUR VET. They sell the big name brands like Royal Canin and Science Diet, both of which are really bad foods. I had a vet tell me one time that through their entire medical training to become a veterinarian, they only studied diet and nutrition for one week. I can honestly say I know more about an appropriate Siberian diet than any vet I have ever found. If you need feeding advice, just ask me.

I will also be sending you a copy of my Sales Agreement for you to review. I am licensed by the State of Wisconsin and have a Seller's Permit; therefore, I have to charge you 5.1% sales tax regardless of where you live. I will have the Sales Agreement for you to sign when you pick up your kitten(s). If you have any questions about this document, please let me know.

One final note, please make sure you are stocked up with your kitten food before you come and pick up your baby. A lot of people wait until the day before their baby is coming home to get food and then they are not able to find what their baby is eating. You need to order their food about two weeks before you are going to come and pick them up.

Congratulations on your new baby(ies). I am so happy and excited for you!

Shelly =^..^=

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