Meowing before Work & Weaning Kittens

May 26, 2013 By Alana Stevenson

Q: My 14 month old cat just had her 1st litter of kittens. I've already had to take them to the vet as they caught cat flu. They are fine now and are getting bigger every day. Because this is the first litter I have ever had I'm still unsure about some things, but would like to know when they would be able to start eating solid food. – Arlene

A: Weaning for kittens is about 12 weeks old. Some breeds and individual kittens will be weaned later and many kittens, in feral colonies, can try to suckle up to 6 months of age. Mothers with larger litters will probably get tired of nursing and might wean or want to wean a bit earlier. It is not uncommon for 8-10 week old kittens to nurse. I personally would allow kittens to nurse as long as the mother allows it or feels comfortable. This would largely depend on litter size and the individual preferences of the mom. Start adding wet food, and dry if you want, when either the mother becomes a bit tired and the kittens become about 4-5 weeks of age. Some kittens will begin to show a preference. Keep in mind the mother will need much more substance and more nutrition and food during pregnancy and while and after nursing. Unfortunately, many kittens are weaned too early. On an interesting side note, late weaning seems to delay or decrease predatory behavior. This is why play-aggression can be quite severe and common in kittens who are weaned too early, especially if they are the only kitties or animals in the household. In addition, kittens will tend to eat food preferred by their mother.

I do recommend spaying the mother, once the kittens are fully weaned, based on the huge surplus of kittens and cats. Although she is 14 months, she is only a little over a year, which is very young. She has not even reached her full body weight, which occurs more at 2 years. Cats can live into their twenties.

Q: Why does my cat want to talk up a storm when I'm leaving for work but then hardly speaks when I'm home? – Michelle

A: It sounds like your kitty is wanting your attention. You did not mention your daily routine, when your kitty is fed or how many meals s/he eats, if your kitty sleeps with you at night or is left out of the bedroom, or if there are other animals in the home. It sounds as if your kitty is the only animal in the household and is wanting your attention and/or looking forward to food (or a combination). If your kitty is left out of the bedroom at night, s/he may especially want your attention when you wake up as s/he may only have a short time with you. In addition, cats are creatures of habit. You both may simply be in a routine that has gotten habitual, which is why your evening routine may be a bit more reserved.

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About Author

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