

YOUR NEW KITTEN



Congratulations on the new addition to your family. You probably have a million questions about your new friend. Hopefully, this information will answer many of them.

INTRODUCTIONS:

We recommend that you separate your new kitten from the other animals in your home for approximately two weeks. After this period, gradually introduce them under supervision. This will help to prevent spreading of any upper respiratory diseases, fleas or ear mites and aid your kitten's adjustment to his/her new surroundings. The kitten's area of exploration should initially be limited to prevent him/her from getting lost and not knowing where his/her litter box is located. If the kitten can't find the box, accidents may occur.



TESTING:

We recommend that your new kitten be tested for Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and Feline AIDS (FIV) **prior to being introduced into the household**. FeLV and FIV are viruses that are contracted by close continuous contact between infected and non-infected cats. Modes of transmission include bite wounds, grooming, and shared litter boxes or food bowls. A mother cat can transmit these viruses to her kittens. Both of these viruses are species specific and **are not contagious to humans**. The test for FeLV and FIV can be done at our hospital in approximately 15 minutes and requires a small sample of blood.

A fecal exam for intestinal parasites ("worms") is necessary for all new kittens. Normally this is performed at your kitten's first exam, and at least once more during the first series of visits. It is common for kittens to have parasites; they can be transmitted from their mother. Intestinal parasites can also be contracted from fleas, or even contact with soil and grass. **It is important to eliminate intestinal parasites from your kitten because some of them are contagious to humans!** More than one dose of deworming medication may be required before your kitten is free of parasites. If your kitten will be kept strictly indoors, fecal exams may be discontinued once it is established he/she is parasite-free.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Kittens need to receive a series of immunizations, just like infants. Your kitten should begin his/her vaccine series at about 8 weeks of age. In accordance with current vaccine recommendations, we offer the following protocol.

FVRCP: This 3-way vaccine protects against Feline Parvovirus (also known as Panleukopenia or Feline Distemper), Feline Herpesvirus 1 (also known as Rhinotracheitis) and Feline Calicivirus. It is given every 2 to 3 weeks from your kitten's first visit until 15 weeks of age. A booster will be given 1 year later, then every 3 years.

RABIES: First vaccine is given at 12 weeks of age, then repeated yearly. There is a 3-year vaccine available but we do not offer it because of its association with a certain type of cancer. Vaccinating against this deadly virus is not only essential to your cat's health, it is also required by law.

FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS: This vaccine, for at-risk cats, is given twice at a 2 week interval, then boosted yearly. It is especially important for cats that go outside.

After a booster vaccination one year later, your cat's immunization schedule will be determined based on various risk factors, including indoor vs. outdoor, presence and health status of other animals in the home, boarding plans, etc.

There is a vaccine available for FIV but we are not currently administering it to our patients because it is new and the safety and effectiveness are not completely known.

FEEDING:

Your kitten should be fed a high quality kitten food three to four times a day. This will gradually be decreased, as your kitten gets older. At about 6 to 8 months of age, you will be feeding twice a day. The choice between dry or canned food is up to you (and your kitten!). Clean water should be available at all times. Many kittens are lactose intolerant, so milk should not be offered. It is important not to feed your pet any chocolate or candy.



GROOMING & HYGIENE:

Daily brushing is recommended to help control shedding hair, and is extremely important for long-haired cats to prevent tangles and mats. Most cats do not require bathing because of their grooming behavior. If your cat does need a bath, we recommend letting a professional do the job to save you and your cat a lot of stress! It is important not to buy over-the-counter flea and tick products, as they are not all FDA approved and can be toxic to your pet. Ask a staff member to recommend a safe, effective product for your use.



One litter box per cat in the house is recommended. Frequent (at least twice daily) cleaning/scooping of the litter box is required to prevent accidents. A major cause of inappropriate elimination is poor litter box hygiene.

DENTAL HEALTH:

For your kitten's dental health it is important to start brushing the teeth at an early age. Playing with the mouth and gums can be helpful with this process. Please visit our retail area for toothpaste and toothbrushes, CET medicated dental chews, Hexarinse oral cleansing gel and Science diet T/D kibble for your new kitten's dental care. Please feel free to ask our staff to demonstrate the proper way to brush your kitten's teeth or to help select the appropriate dental home care products for your kitten.

ROUTINE SURGERY:

Your kitten should be spayed/neutered at 6 months of age. Spays stay one night, and neuters go home the evening of their surgery day. We highly recommend microchipping your kitten at the time of this surgery. This will help you to be reunited with your pet in case he/she becomes lost. Please feel free to ask one of our technicians to give you an estimate for any of these procedures for your kitten.

Our office does not offer declaw surgery. Our staff will be happy to clip your kitten's nails and provide alternative suggestions. Declawing is a controversial elective procedure and we understand if you feel it is something you need to have done. In such case we recommend doing so at 10-12 weeks of age and we can refer you to another facility that we feel will perform it in the best and safest way for your kitten. Of course you and your kitten will be welcomed back here for your regular veterinary care!

SAFETY TIPS:

The best way to help your kitten live a long and healthy life is to keep him/her inside. This can prevent the transmission of disease, parasites, wounds, automobile tragedies and the possible loss of your pet.



When transporting your cat, whether on a long trip or a visit to our office, always have him/her in a sturdy, escape-proof carrier. When you arrive at our office, do not open the carrier until you are shown into an exam room and the doors are closed.

Tie strings from blinds up away from your kitten's play area to prevent your pet from becoming tangled and possibly strangled by them. Do not leave your kitten unattended with **any** toy that has a string or elastic cord.

Become familiar with your house plants and know whether any of them are toxic if eaten. Keep all houseplants, especially toxic ones, out of reach of your kitten.

Kittens are very tiny and love to hide in warm places. Always check laundry before washing or drying to make sure your kitten isn't napping there. Check the clothes dryer before starting it. Make sure your kitten isn't under the recliner before you return the chair to its normal position. Watch where you walk; kittens tend to suddenly scoot underfoot.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

We have a list of groomers, pet sitters and boarding facilities that our clients have recommended over the years. We will be happy to give you a copy. If you have any to add, please let us know.

Your kitten's health and comfort are very important to us. If this handout has not answered all of your questions, please feel free to ask.

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