



Congratulations on your new Kitten/Cat!

This handout is being provided to help you better understand the medical needs of your new pet. Hearing all this information at one time can be overwhelming. This handout delivers an organized comprehensive review of preventative medicine to aid you in keeping your pet as healthy as possible.

The following information will be covered:

- Vaccinations
- Intestinal Parasites
- Parasite Prevention
- Spaying/Neutering

FeLV/FIV Viruses

Before we start vaccinating your pet, the first thing we like to do is test for 2 different viruses that cause immunodeficiency in cats. They are known as feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). The only way we can know if your cat has one of these viruses is to test his/her blood. We can run the test in house and have results within 10 minutes.

The transmission for the viruses are a little different from each other. Cats are infected with FIV because of a bite by another infected cat, it is passed through the saliva. However, FeLV, can be spread through casual contact. That includes contact with saliva, urine or blood. While it is unusual for cats in the same household to spread FIV to one another unless they fight, FeLV can be spread by close social contact, even if they don't fight. Both FIV and FeLV can be transmitted when the kittens are in the mother's womb.

People and dogs cannot catch FIV or FeLV. Only cats are susceptible to these viruses.

Vaccinations

When to start Vaccinating?

Vaccinations should be started between 6-8 weeks of age. Expect that your pet will have a series of **booster vaccines every 3-4 weeks** until the appropriate age and appropriate immune response has been acquired. These booster vaccines are necessary for your pet's immune system to be able to adequately defend itself against disease.

What Vaccines and Why?

Rabies and distemper are the 2 core vaccines that are highly recommended in cats.

Listed below is a description of each disease the distemper vaccine protects your pet against:

- **Panleukopenia** is also known as feline distemper. It is a gastrointestinal disease that can cause vomiting, diarrhea, decrease in appetite, fever and depression.
- **Rhinotracheitis** is an upper respiratory disease caused by herpesvirus-1. Clinical signs include sneezing, discharge from the eyes and nose, conjunctivitis, mouth breathing and coughing.
- **Calicivirus** affects the upper respiratory system. This virus can cause sneezing and runny eyes. Other signs include moderate fever, ulcers and blisters on the tongue.
- **Leukemia**- As discussed above, FeLV can cause immune system suppression and susceptibility to other infections. There is no connection between FeLV and leukemia as it occurs in humans. Cats that live in multi-cat households or roam outdoors are at a higher risk.

Rabies Vaccine- This vaccine is required by law. Rabies disease is 100% fatal. Having your pet vaccinated not only protects them from the disease; but also protects them from having to be quarantined or euthanized for rabies testing if they happen to bite someone or another pet.

Intestinal Parasites

There are several types of parasites that can live in our pet's gastrointestinal system. Although many of our pets appear healthy and we may not see the need to check for parasites, veterinarians are concerned about these parasites affecting not only your pet's health, but also you and your families' health. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to humans, especially our children.

Parasites can affect our pets' health by suppressing their immune system, causing weight loss, diarrhea and GI upset, anemia and coughing.

It is important to understand that most parasites require a microscope to examine the feces for eggs. It is highly recommended that a fecal sample be checked yearly to screen for the intestinal parasites listed below.

The most common parasites include:

Roundworms:

- Transmission is from ingesting infected rodents or feces from infected animals. Many kittens are infected through their mother's milk when nursing.
- Transmissible to humans: Yes

Tapeworms:

- Transmission is from ingesting a flea or rabbits/rodents carrying tapeworms.
- Transmissible to humans: Yes

Hookworms:

- Transmission is from ingestion from soil/feces infected in the environment OR by direct penetration through the skin.
- Transmissible to humans: Yes

Whipworms:

- Transmission is from ingestion of infected eggs from the environment.
- Transmissible to humans: Yes
- The eggs are very resilient and can survive in the environment for many years even through freezing and high temperatures.

Coccidia:

- Transmission is from ingesting infected rodents or feces from infected animals.
- Transmissible to humans: potentially, but not likely.

Flea and Tick Prevention

There are many flea and tick preventatives available for your pet. These preventatives are recommended year-round as both fleas and ticks can be active when the weather is above freezing. Talk to us today about what option is best for you and your pet.

Reason to spay or neuter your pet

Benefits of spaying:

- **Mammary cancer** is a serious concern in intact females. Female cats are often mature enough to reproduce at 6 months of age. We recommend spaying your pet between 5-6 months of age, before their first heat cycle. After 1 year of age, the benefits of a spay preventing cancer dramatically decreases, but still does help.
- **Pyometra:** This is an infection of the uterus. This infection comes on very suddenly and is considered life threatening if an emergency spay surgery is not performed.

Benefits of Neutering:

- Helps prevent or decrease some bad behaviors such as urine marking and roaming. When a male cat begins to mark his territory by spraying urine, it can become a habit that he will continue even after being neutered.
- Neutering your cat can also reduce the risk of prostate cancer and eliminate testicular infections and cancer.
- We recommend neutering your cat at 5-6 months of age.

