

Congratulations on your new kitten!



The following is information about caring for your newest member of the family.

Vaccinations

Cats are continually exposed to a variety of diseases. Many of these diseases are hardy viruses which can withstand extreme environmental conditions. Even indoor cats are not safe since many of these diseases are airborne. As you may know, there is no effective treatment for viruses in animals or people! Because of this, viruses are the number one killer of our cats. Fortunately, the vaccines we use are highly effective at preventing most viral diseases. Due to the nature of your cat's immune system, the age at which your pet receives its vaccines and the timing of the shots are very important. When your kitten receives its first vaccination, our doctors will outline the series of shots your pet will need. In general, kittens require a series of two or three vaccinations depending on their age and breed. When the initial kitten shots are complete, boosters are required to maintain your cat's immunity against these deadly diseases. We routinely vaccinate all cats against four different diseases (three of these are in one shot). If you plan on letting your cat outdoors we also recommend vaccinating against FeLV.

Feline Leukemia (FeLV)

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) is the number one

killer of cats. This virus can be passed through any body fluid, most commonly saliva and from a mother to unborn or new born kittens. In the United States alone there are at least one million infected cats. All cats and kittens need to be tested for Feline Leukemia Virus before they are brought into a household with any other cats. We recommend vaccinating for FeLV if our cat tests negative and has any chance of contacting an infected cat.

Feline Infectious Virus (F.I.V.)

Feline Infectious Virus (F.I.V.) is very similar to FeLV in its transmission and clinical sign. We routinely check kittens for this with the same blood sample used for FeLV testing. The vaccine for F.I.V. has controversial efficacy and currently we don't recommend it.

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (F.I.P.)

F.I.P. is a virus which causes the death of 500,000 cats each year in the U.S. alone (only Feline Leukemia Virus is deadlier). Once contracted this disease is always fatal. Cats at risk are those in multi-cat households and especially indoor/outdoor cats. Testing for F.I.P. is unreliable without clinical signs so we don't usually screen kittens for this.

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly viral disease that can be passed from animals to people. Fortunately, Rabies is very uncommon in our area but cats are required by law to be vaccinated against this. In Illinois all cats need be initially vaccinated with a 1 year Rabies vaccine but thereafter may be boosted with a 3 year vaccine.

FVRCP

FVRCP refers to one vaccine that protects your cat against the following three serious feline diseases:

Feline Panleukopenia (feline distemper) is among the most widespread of all cat diseases, and is extremely contagious. Characterized by fever, loss of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea, feline Panleukopenia causes high death loss, particularly among kittens.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR) is a highly contagious respiratory disease characterized by sneezing, loss of appetite, fever, and eye inflammation. As the disease progresses, a discharge is noted from both nose and eyes.

Feline Calicivirus (FCV) is another serious feline respiratory infection. FCV often occurs simultaneously with Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis. Signs of infection are similar to FVR (fever, loss

of appetite, nasal discharge), but Calicivirus-infected cats may also have ulcers on the tongue.

Nutrition

What should I feed?

Cats are carnivorous by nature and need meat in their diet. The easiest way to do this is to feed only canned food if possible. Not all canned foods are equal and you'll want to look at the top three ingredients – these should be meat, liver, or at least meat products (such as chicken meal). We now recommend that dry foods not be fed. The problem with dry foods is that they are too high in carbohydrates and too low in moisture. If you must feed a dry food, try to add water to the food and keep the “meat principle” in mind and choose a diet with high meat protein content. Ingredients are always listed with the highest percentage ingredient first, followed in descending order by the remaining items. A word of caution here – always look at the top five ingredients. If the first ingredient is meat but the next two or three ingredients are grains – then you're feeding a grain based diet. Examples of high protein quality cat foods are Wellness, and Fromm's.

What are the benefits of canned food?

Cats that eat exclusively canned food have a lower incidence of many common diseases. These include, obesity, Diabetes, bladder infections and arthritis

How much should I feed?

Until about 8 months of age, your kitten can eat as much as it wants. Having said that, we usually feed 8 week kittens 1/2 of a can divided into two or three meals daily. This amount is gradually increased. Kittens are usually fed the same amount as an adult cat by the age of 4 months. Most adult cats are fed 1/2 of a 5.5oz can twice daily. Only one in five adult cats is able to “graze” or regulate its own food intake. That is to say that 80% of adult cats are overweight. Therefore, it is best to feed your cat twice daily. For each meal you can feed a 1/2 can of canned food(5.5 oz can) or a portion of raw food .

Spaying, Neutering and Declawing

What Do “Spay and Neuter” Really Mean?

Spaying is the removal of the female cat's reproductive organs (ovaries and uterus). Neutering is the removal of a male cat's testicles. Both procedures are performed under general anesthesia.

Why Is This Necessary?

Spaying or neutering your cat is good for you, your cat, and society. “Fixing” your pet

eliminates unwanted heat cycles in females and lessens roaming and fighting in male cats. Your cat's behavior will not change nor will your pet get overweight as a result of surgery. Your cat will benefit from the surgery in many ways. Neutering male cats eliminates the possibility of spraying (urinating on vertical spaces) 99% of the time. In female cats the chance of uterine and ovarian cancer and uterine infections will be eliminated. Spaying a female cat before her first heat cycle will also reduce the risk of mammary cancer when she is older. Fixing your pet is also good for society. Each day 70,000 puppies and kittens are born in the U.S. Each year, 8 million of these pets have to be euthanized because there are simply not enough homes for them. In only 7 years, one female cat and her offspring can be the source of 420,000 kittens!

When Should The Surgery Be Performed?

The best time to have your cat fixed is between the ages of 6-7 months. This is before the first heat cycle in females and before unwanted sexual behaviors, especially spraying, in male cats.

Is Declawing Necessary?

No, if your cat doesn't use its claws to scratch people or furniture than surgery is unnecessary. If you can trim your cat's nails twice monthly, this may eliminate or lessen the damage your cat does. The surgery is the removal of the last digit or knuckle at the tip of the paws. The surgery itself is painless, but there can be some discomfort for up to one week after the procedure.

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

What is hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy?

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart that causes concentric thickening of the heart muscle, meaning the wall thickness increases while decreasing the chamber size. Due to the nature of this disease this structural change in the heart muscle is often not visible on radiographs. The disease is fairly common in young cats (typically male pure breeds), and is often not associated with any audible change to the heart that would be detected during physical exam. This disease is not only dangerous because it is challenging to detect, it also can prove fatal with anesthesia if not diagnosed.

There have been new steps to diagnose this disease using a blood test called the cardiac BNP test.

Using the snap BNP test as a screening tool is useful to help rule out severe subclinical cardiac disease. Meaning a positive test is strongly suggestive of heart disease. However, there can

be an occasional false positive. The goal is to avoid anesthetic associated fatalities in these subclinical cases. We recommend this test as a pre-anesthetic screening tool for all young cats (under the age of 4 years), and any age cat with a heart murmur.

Intestinal Parasites

Dogs and cats are host to many different parasites. Studies have shown that up to 75% of 4 week old puppies and kittens are parasitized. Many breeders and pet stores will deworm kittens without actually testing for parasites. This is an excellent practice, but unfortunately no one deworming medicine kills all types of parasites. The best way to detect parasites is by a "fecal centrifugation" technique which involves the use of an outside laboratory. Contrary to popular belief most worms cannot be seen in your pet's stool. Exceptions to this are the tapeworm and round worm. The tapeworm looks like small grains of rice and are most often noticed under the tail or on top of the stool. Please note that tapeworms are not usually detected by fecal flotations. Roundworms can sometimes be seen in heavily parasitized pets. These look like little moving strings. YUK! Because intestinal parasite screens detect worm eggs and some worms release eggs intermittently, it is best to check a series of at least two stool samples. This is best done when your kitten receives its vaccinations. For healthy adult cats, a yearly test is usually all that is necessary.

Very rarely, some types of parasites can infect us by being transferred from a cat's stool to our mouth. Therefore, it is wise to wash your hands after playing with your kitten until he has tested negative on a series of intestinal parasite screens. Treatments for parasites are very effective. The worming medicines we use, kill all the parasites between 80% and 90% of the time. Also we ask that you bring in a stool sample about 7 days after the last dose was given to make sure your kitten has not become re-infected. Cleaning the litter box after each treatment will also help prevent reinfection. Tapeworms are most easily detected by checking under your pet's tail about 7 days after treatment.

Heartworms

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes and just one adult worm can cause sudden death in a cat. This disease can be easily prevented by giving heartworm prevention once monthly May through December. The product of choice is Revolution because it not only prevents heartworm disease, it also prevents fleas, ticks, and serves

as an intestinal de-wormer. The heartworm medication is very safe and works by killing the microscopic form of immature worms. Because infected cats carry low numbers of worms, heartworm medication can be given safely, even if a cat is already infected. Therefore, we don't recommend yearly testing for cats. Unlike dogs, cats cannot be easily treated for heartworms, as the treatment can be fatal.

Fleas

Flea prevention is very important to keeping your pet healthy and happy. One benefit of Chicago's cold weather is that fleas do not survive over the winter. The flea season is at its worst in August, September, and October and we recommend using a preventative treatment from June 1st to the first hard frost or about November 1st.

Flea bite hypersensitivity is the number one cause of skin disease for both dogs and cats in the United States. All dogs and cats vary in their response to flea bites. Some are very tolerant and show no signs that they are hosting parasites, while others are very sensitive to the biting little monsters. The reason: the flea's saliva causes irritation only in certain individuals. For pets that are allergic, some of the signs include intense itching, hair loss and ugly sores, especially around the rump and tail.

How do I prevent fleas?

The easiest and most effective adulticide is Revolution or Bravecto. This is applied once monthly. Other flea sprays and powders that are labeled for use in cats can be effective but need to be used at least once weekly, or worse they can cause skin irritation or infection. Flea collars are not suggested for flea control because they don't work and can be dangerous.

An alternative to Frontline is Revolution. Revolution is a product that can protect your cat from fleas and other harmful parasites. Using this medication is simple and easy- a once a month application applied to the skin between the shoulder blades prevents heartworm disease, treats hookworms, roundworms, and ear mites and prevents and controls flea infestations. Revolution kills adult fleas but is not quite as effective as Frontline. This product should be used from May through December (the additional 2 months are for heartworm prevention).

How do I know if my cat has fleas?

The easiest and most accurate way to check for fleas is to look for "flea dirt" which is actually the stool of the fleas digested bloodmeal. To detect flea dirt, have your cat sit and place a moist paper towel under its rump. Next, vigorously scratch your cat right above the tail.

If any black dots turn red when slowly rolled across the paper towel, your cat has fleas. Aaah! Now what?

The basic principle of flea treatment is that the pet and the home all have to be treated at the same time. Each pet must be treated for at least three months, and the environment needs to be treated for that length of time as well. The reasoning behind this, is that the complete flea life cycle can take up to three months to go from pupae stage to adult. When the flea is in the pupae stage flea products are unable to penetrate that larval stage to effectively kill the flea.

Treating your house is a three step project. First, all carpets and upholstered furniture should be vacuumed. Then throw away the vacuum bag or empty bag less vacuums outside! Solid surface floors should be washed with Pine -Sol. Secondly, a hand held premise spray (Knockout Spray) should be used under furniture, in nooks and crannies, and in the closets of carpeted rooms. Throw rugs on hardwood floors should also be sprayed Fish tanks should be sealed with cellophane when using premise spray. The most effective tool you have to help treat your home for fleas is your vacuum cleaner. The vibration from the vacuum stimulates fleas to progress through their life cycle faster, so that premise sprays or topical products can effectively kill the fleas.

Boarding

LePar Animal Hospital is proud to offer boarding services to all of our clients. Our boarding services are especially important for older pets and pets that require special attention or medications. All cats will be kept in individual cages in our separate cat ward. Every pet boarding in our hospital will be examined at no charge by a Veterinary Technician and will be checked for signs of external parasites such as fleas and ticks. Every boarded pet will have to be current on vaccines, have tested negative for parasites within one year and be free of infectious diseases. We feel that this is necessary to

insure the health of all of our "guests".

IF YOUR PET NEEDS SPECIAL ATTENTION WHILE HE IS HERE, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

A complete physical by one of our doctors or daily veterinary supervision of a particular problem is something that many of our clients choose. Dental Cleanings, baths, nail trims and anal gland expression are just some of the additional services we offer. We always recommend you bring in his regular diet and let us know the frequency and amount you give. This is especially important for cats because many are finicky. Treats are O.K. with us but we will only give ones that you bring in. All cats that enjoy attention will be played with at least twice daily.

WE STRIVE TO MAKE YOUR PETS' STAY WITH US AS ENJOYABLE AS POSSIBLE.

Please let us know of any special concerns you may have. Our receptionist will be happy to review our boarding policies, give you an estimate of fees or answer any questions that you may have.

Dental Care

Regular brushing and yearly dental cleanings are just as important for dogs and cats as they are for humans. But too often, our pet's dental needs are overlooked. Untreated teeth can cause serious problems in the overall health of a pet. Periodontal disease is the number one dental problem in dogs, and cats often develop cavities below the gum line which may be hard to detect. As in humans, abscessed teeth or periodontal disease can affect other parts of the body. In dogs and cats, it can cause heart and kidney disease.

We urge you to start a dental program for your pet. Annual dental checkups and cleanings under a short-lasting anesthetic are important to your pet's good health. Equally important is home dental care, such as brushing your pet's teeth at least three times per week. We recommend the following brushing technique for both younger and older animals, although it is easier to start brushing when the pet is young.

To effectively brush your pet's teeth we recommend using a pet based tooth paste such as CET toothpaste. Using this toothpaste we recommend applying a small amount to a mild abrasive surface, such as a gauze square, cloth, or even finger brush. Then, using small circular motions brush around the outsides of your cat's teeth. There is no need to try and brush the inner portion of your cat's teeth.



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