

Kitten vaccination series:

During your cat's first four months of life, we recommend check-ups every 3 to 4 weeks for routine physical examinations, vaccinations, and deworming. These visits are also designed to provide you with an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns about your new pet. Depending upon your kitten's age at the first visit, he or she may require either three or four visits. One of our outpatient technicians will call you the day after each visit to check up on your pet and to answer any additional questions that you may have. We tailor our care to each individual patient's needs; however, below is a list of what you can generally expect at each visit:

First Kitten Examination (6-8 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Initial examination fee charged

FVRCP Combo Vaccination

Deworming and/or Fecal examination

Flea Medication

Appointment scheduled for: _____

Second Kitten Examination (9-12 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Complimentary

FVRCP Combo Booster

Feline Leukemia Vaccination (outdoor cats)

Deworming and/or Fecal examination

Appointment scheduled for: _____

Third Kitten Examination (13-16 weeks of age):

Comprehensive Physical Examination – Complimentary

FVRCP Combo Booster

Feline Leukemia Booster (outdoor cats)

Rabies Vaccination

Deworming and/or Fecal Examination

Appointment scheduled for: _____

Vaccinations:

Your kitten will receive a series of booster vaccinations between 8 and 16 weeks of age. During this time, your kitten's immune system is building the strength to fight disease. There are many diseases that are fatal to cats. Fortunately, many of these diseases are preventable by the use of vaccines. The following vaccines are available for your kitten:

- **FVRCP** – This stands for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia. In order to be effective, this vaccine should be given every 3 to 4 weeks beginning at about 6 to 8 weeks of age and continuing until your kitten is about 16 weeks of age. This schedule may vary depending on your pet's individual needs.
 - Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis is also called feline herpesvirus. It is a virus that causes sneezing, nasal discharge, and red, weepy eyes.
 - Calicivirus is a virus that causes sneezing, nasal discharge, and ulcers in the mouth.
 - Panleukopenia is a virus that causes severe, life threatening diarrhea.
- **Rabies** – Rabies is a fatal viral infection. The virus is shed in saliva and is commonly transmitted from bite wounds by an infected animal. This vaccine is given once during kittenhood between 12-16 weeks of age.
- **Feline Leukemia** – This is a virus that causes immune suppression and sometimes cancer. It is passed by close physical contact with infected cats. Therefore this vaccination is recommended for cats that roam outdoors but is not necessary for cats that live indoors only. This vaccine should be given twice 3 to 4 weeks apart and is usually given at 11 and 14 weeks of age.

After the kitten vaccine series is completed, all vaccines will be boosted again in one year. Following that, Rabies vaccine is boosted yearly while FVRCP and Feline Leukemia vaccines are boosted every three years on a rotation.

Flea and Tick Prevention:

Fleas can make your young kitten miserable. It only takes one bite to cause itching, and some cats even develop skin infections as a result of flea allergies. In addition, tapeworms are transmitted by ingestion of fleas during self grooming. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you use a monthly flea control product to protect your kitten. Common signs of flea infestation include licking and biting at the base of the tail and the belly, and scratching around the neck and ears. If you see these signs, even if you do not see any fleas, it is likely that your kitten is suffering from flea bites! We recommend the "Seresto" flea collar and several topical flea control products.

Fecal examination (for intestinal parasites):

We recommend that all outdoor cats have yearly fecal examinations. This is especially important for households with children. Some intestinal parasites are zoonotic (able to infect humans), and transmission occurs with fecal/oral contact. A kitten or cat may be infected with an intestinal parasite without showing any symptoms.

The most common parasites seen are tapeworms, roundworms, *Coccidia*, and *Giardia*. A fecal sample (about the size of a grape) is all that is needed for testing. Results are reported in 1-2 days.

Spaying or neutering:

Young cats should be spayed or neutered between 5 and 6 months of age. We use state of the art monitoring equipment throughout these surgical procedures.

It is behaviorally beneficial to spay or neuter your pet early in life. For example, neutering male cats before they develop unwanted behaviors associated with sexual maturity may prevent the development of these behaviors. However, if a cat is neutered after developing these behaviors, they may not cease after neutering. The veterinarian will help you to determine the best time to spay or neuter your pet.

The benefits of neutering your male cat include the following:

- reducing urine marking behavior
- eliminating mounting and aggressive behaviors
- reducing roaming behavior

The benefits of spaying your female cat include the following:

- eliminating unwanted heats
- eliminating vocalization that occurs during heats
- reducing the risk of mammary cancer
- eliminating the risk of ovarian and uterine cancer
- eliminating the risk of pregnancy
- eliminating the risk of pyometra, a life-threatening uterine infection

Microchips:

A microchip is a device that is used to identify your pet if he or she is lost. The microchip, about the size of a grain of rice, is implanted under your pet's skin between the shoulder blades. Veterinary clinics and shelters scan for microchips on all stray pets. If your pet has a microchip, his or her individual identification number is used to reunite you with your pet. A microchip is also required for international travel. We can microchip your pet at any time; however many pet owners choose to have the microchip implanted at the time of the spay or neuter surgery.

Pet insurance:

Starting cat insurance while your kitten is young can be beneficial. Pet insurance helps shield your budget from unexpected veterinary costs. There are numerous insurance companies and policies to choose from. Knowing that your cat's healthcare is covered helps allow you to determine the course of treatment based on what is most effective for the health and happiness of your cat (not on the size of your wallet).

Feeding your kitten:

Young kittens should be fed three to four times a day from the time they are weaned until 10 weeks of age. After 10 weeks, they may be fed twice daily. You should select a food that is specifically formulated for kittens. There are many high quality cat food brands. In particular, we recommend Royal Canin, Purina, Science Diet, Blue Buffalo and Iams/Eukanuba brands.

The amount to feed a growing cat depends upon weight, age, and body condition. The manufacturer's recommended total daily amount is usually listed by body weight on the food bag. The total daily amount should be divided into equal portions to be fed at each meal. Keep in mind that the manufacturer's recommendations are often high. Dry kibble is convenient to feed and promotes dental health throughout life. However, canned food is great for weight control especially in indoor cats. Always have fresh water available for your kitten.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns about your kitten. Our outpatient technicians and veterinarians are always available for medical and behavioral consultations. We look forward to getting to know the newest member of your family!