



Preventative Health Program for Your New Kitten

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. One of the most important things to do is to arrange to take your kitten to the veterinarian for a general health check. Your vet will be able to give you advice regarding basic care for your kitten as well as give them any vaccinations and worming treatments that are needed. We hope these notes will answer most of the questions you may have about the care of your new kitten.

Vaccinations

To safeguard your pet from potentially serious and sometimes fatal diseases we recommend vaccinations. Cats are vaccinated against:

- **Feline Enteritis** - This is the most common life threatening disease affecting cats. It is a very contagious viral disease with a high death rate especially in cats under 12 months of age. Signs include fever, depression, severe stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration.
- **Feline Respiratory Disease (Cat Flu)** - This is a highly contagious disease. Cats of all ages are at risk, especially young kittens, Siamese and Burmese cats. Signs include sneezing, nasal discharge, runny eyes, coughing, loss of appetite and tongue ulcers. This can lead to severe dehydration followed by death.
- **Feline Chlamydia** - Chlamydia is an organism that causes eye disease, predominantly seen in kittens up to 9 months of age. The signs of infection are discharge from the eyes (sticky eye or conjunctivitis) and nose, fever, coughing, respiratory signs, enlarged lymph nodes, inappetence, weight loss and depression. Chlamydia is found in up to 1/3 of cases of conjunctivitis and is transmitted by close and persistent contact between cats.
- **FIV Feline Immunodeficiency Virus** - This blood borne viral infection causes feline AIDS which is potentially fatal. Vaccination is available and will be recommended by our veterinarians if your cat is considered to be at risk. The virus interferes with the immune system and initial symptoms such as fever, sores, lesions and diarrhoea progress to severe chronic infections as the immune system is overcome. There is no treatment or cure for the virus itself.

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The following program is recommended to give your cat the best possible protection against the common infectious diseases.

Young cats require 3 vaccinations;

- 6-8 weeks: F3 (cat flu and enteritis)
- 12 weeks F5 Vaccine:
- 16 weeks F5 Vaccine:

F5 Thereafter annual F5 boosters (at least 2 weeks before going into a cattery) Your kitten should be quarantined (that is, no contact with unvaccinated cats) until 10 days after the 16 week vaccination.

Feline AIDS is another life-threatening infection which your kitten can also be vaccinated against (F6 Vaccination).

Intestinal worms

The intestinal worms of cats are roundworm, hookworm and tapeworm. These worms can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, poor condition and ill-thrift in cats. It is also important to keep your pet and your home worm free as these worms can cause disease in humans, particularly children (ask the vet for more details). Drontal™ all wormer tablets or Profender™ topspot applications will treat your kitten for all these worms.

To control all intestinal worms:

- a) Ensure you use Drontal - every 2 weeks between the ages of 2-12 weeks - every month between the ages of 3- 6 months of age - every 3 months from 6 months of age
- b) Decrease the chances of re-infection by cleaning litter trays regularly to stop kittens eating faeces (may be inadvertent through grooming).

Flea control

There are many different products available but the important thing to remember is to use safe, effective, residual products that will take care of the environmental flea problem as well as that on your cat.

Your options are;

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- Frontline Plus™ – kills adult fleas on the cat and the juvenile fleas in the environment (topspot), also helps prevent ticks
- Advantage™ – kills adult fleas on the cat and the juvenile fleas in the environment (topspot)
- Revolution™ – kills adult fleas, environmental fleas, gut worms and prevents Heartworm (topspot)

Heartworm

Cats contract Heartworm the same way dogs do - from infective mosquitoes. All cats should be on Heartworm prevention as, once the cat has contracted Heartworm, early diagnosis and treatment is difficult. Prevention should begin within one month of possible mosquito exposure, which for most kittens means before they are 3 months old. The best method of Heartworm prevention in cats is the monthly topspot; Revolution™.

Diet and Dental care

Your young cat has special nutritional requirements to support healthy growth and reduce the risk of serious health problems later in life. We recommend Hill's Science Diet Kitten or Royal Canin Kitten as being the best, and most economical, diets for your kitten. A raw chicken wing at least once a week is ideal for keeping your cat's teeth clean. Some cats will not eat bones and for these cats you should try CET chews or regular brushing. Some cats will require periodic teeth scales under a general anaesthetic despite your best efforts to keep their teeth clean.

Desexing

We recommend desexing your cat at around 6 months of age. This corresponds to the average onset of puberty for both male and female cats. Delaying desexing will result in unwanted litters (which could potentially add to the stray and feral cat problem) and leads to a higher risk of mammary tumours and uterine infections in female cats. Non-desexed male cats spray urine to mark their territory, wander and get into cat fights.

Ticks

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Frontline Spray™ applied to the entire coat every 3 weeks is the best prevention currently available for ticks in cats. This, however, should always be used in conjunction with effective daily checking of the entire skin surface.

Chemicals and Drugs

Cats are very susceptible to chemicals. This is a combination of their small size and also their inability to detoxify some chemicals humans and dogs cope with easily. For that reason you should never put any chemical on or in your cat unless it says “this is safe for cats” or the vets tell you it is safe for cats.

Council requirements

Ipswich City Council does now require cats to be registered. Compulsory microchipping for all new kittens has not yet become a reality but the Ipswich City Council may adopt similar laws in the future.

We strongly recommend the use of microchipping as being the most reliable method of identifying your cat if it strays from home.

Once again, congratulations on your new addition and please feel free to call our hospitals should you require additional information, guidance or advice about raising your kitten.

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