



Stonebridge
ANIMAL HQ



Information about your new kitten

By selecting a kitten as your pet, you have chosen an extremely clean pet and one that usually needs little house training because its mother has already taught it to use the litter box.

The cat is an independent creature that requires little care but provides excellent companionship.

Cats must have clean litter, grooming, and attention in the form of play. A cat will be quite content to live its entire life indoors provided that its owner offers companionship. If you will be away from home for long periods of time, consider getting two cats to keep one another company. It can also be very entertaining to watch two kittens play, and they will be less likely to destroy your house out of boredom.

Male or female, cats are affectionate, intelligent, and playful. However, unless you plan to breed the cat, NEUTERING is recommended to keep males from spraying and females from producing unwanted litters. Neutering should be performed at 3-6 months of age.

Supplies needed for a new kitten include a proper health record with dates of vaccination, high quality food, bowls for food and water, a litter pan with litter and scoop, grooming tools, a pet carrier, and of course, toys.

Prepare your home for the new kitten before letting it loose. Be sure all doors and windows are closed to prevent escape. Place the kitten's bed, litter pan, and food and water in a secluded area. Take the kitten out and let it explore the room where it is to stay. After the kitten is comfortable with this area, and sure of where the litter pan is located, you may gradually let it explore the rest of the house.

Show the kitten the litter box, and place the kitten in it several times. It is rare for a kitten to reject the box. If this does happen, the litter box should be moved to another secluded area. If the problem continues it may be necessary to place several boxes around the home. The kitten will find one that suits its needs for privacy within 24 hours. Remember, cats are extremely clean pets.

It is surprisingly easy for kittens and even dogs to adapt to each other – if they are introduced gradually and gently.

Unlike most pets, cats remain true to their “meat-eater” heritage, and have special food requirements. Taurine, for example, is an amino acid that is vital. Non-meat eaters can make taurine in their body, but cats cannot. Therefore they must eat foods that contain taurine.

Commercial diets for cats must be balanced and nutritional, specialized, and concentrated in small portions. Because of this feline foods are slightly more expensive than dog foods. Cat food should contain 30-40% protein.

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A cat cannot (and should not) be compared with any other domestic pet because of its many unique qualities. Cats combine a strong sense of independence with a deep affection for its owner. It is self-reliant but can be trained in obedience and tricks. It is easy to housebreak, adapts well to apartment living, does not require you to walk it, and naturally keeps its self clean and neat.

GENERAL HEALTH CARE SUGGETIONS:

Have your new kitten examined by a veterinarian immediately after obtaining it.

Vaccinations:

Rabies

Feline distemper, Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Chylamydia

Feline leukemia

FIV

Parasites:

We routinely de-worm for the most common internal parasites at the same time as immunizations are given. Over the counter medications are usually not effective and may even cause illness. Watch the stools for small white segments that look similar to rice. These are tapeworms and require a special type of medication. There is no one worming medication that treats every possible type of parasite.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO DO A FECAL TEST ON YOUR PET. The Center for Disease Control recommends testing every 6 months due to the fact that parasites can pass from pets to humans. Always wash your hands after handling your pet or cleaning out the litter box.

Flea control:

We recommend using Revolution year round to treat and prevent fleas. Over the counter flea treatments are usually ineffective and can be toxic.

Hairballs:

Cats spend as much as 1/3 of their waking hours grooming themselves. This means every cat, even short haired cats, swallow a lot of hair. While this is a natural cleaning process it can lead to certain health problems. The symptoms of hairballs include a dry hacking cough, vomiting, and constipation. Sometimes the vomit takes a tube shaped form. This is rarely fatal, but requires treatment. Daily brushing improves the coat and helps prevent hairballs, but all cats should be routinely given a hairball medication such as Laxatone.

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De-clawing:

Cats can be de-clawed front only or all 4 feet. We recommend front de-claw only. If a cat has its hind claws it still has some kind of protection and could climb up a tree to escape from a dog or other attacker. De-clawing can be done as early as 3 months and can be done along with the spay/neuter operation. Kittens recover very quickly from this procedure. Older cats sometimes have a more difficult time healing from a de-claw. We urge anyone considering de-clawing their cat to have it done at an early age.

Spay and Neuter:

Best performed between 3-6 months of age. Cats reach sexual maturity at 6-12 months of age. Females continue to come into heat ever 3-4 weeks until they're bred. Signs of a female cat coming into heat include: restlessness, acting strange, rolling around on the floor, unusual meowing and holding her tail straight up in the air. Having your cat spayed or neutered can alleviate such undesirable behavior as spraying (marking territory), aggressive behavior towards other cats, fighting and roaming when outdoors. Besides behavioral problems, the spay and neuter will eliminate certain health risks pets encounter due to hormones, such as uterine infections, breast tumors, testicular and prostate tumors.

Grooming and bathing:

Long haired cats need to be brushed daily to prevent mats from forming. Matted fur is dirty, itchy, and uncomfortable and even causes sores to form on the skin. Cats with severe mats may have to be shaved down by a professional groomer. All cats benefit from daily brushing as it reduces shedding, improves the health of the coat, and helps prevent hairballs. Since cats have the ability and natural instinct to clean themselves, you rarely need to bathe them. However, if you or a household member is allergic you may want to routinely bathe your cat to reduce allergens. We recommend bathing your cat at least once a month if you have problems with allergies.

Litter Box:

Cats are private- try to place the litter box in a secluded area. For multi-cat households have a box for each cat. For multi-level homes have a box for each floor, especially for the older geriatric cats. Be sure to scoop the litter every day. Many cats will stop using their box if it is too dirty. If your cat does stop using its box it may be trying to tell you something. Before making a diagnosis of a behavioral problem, it is always necessary to rule out medical problems. All cats with elimination problems should have a physical exam and a complete urinalysis and fecal test.

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Medications:

Never give your cat Tylenol, Aspirin or any over the counter medications.
THEY CAN KILL YOUR CAT.

Traveling with your cat:

Most cats do not like to travel, but the day may arise to go to the Veterinarian, take a trip, move, etc. Even held closely in your arms or on a leash the cat may try to flee and, out of fear, may even bite or scratch you. Any trip, long or short, should entail the cat being placed in a carrier designed to transport cats. A cat should never be left alone in a car because of heat stroke. Do not feed your cat before leaving as it will be more likely to vomit.

The cat's age:

| cat's age | man's age | cat's age | man's age |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2 months | 9-10 months | 5 years | 38-40 years |
| 3 months | 2-3 years | 6 years | 42-44 years |
| 4 months | 5-6 years | 7 years | 45 years |
| 5 months | 8-9 years | 8 years | 48 years |
| 6 months | 14 years | 9 years | 55 years |
| 7 months | 15 years | 10 years | 60 years |
| 8 months | 16 years | 11 years | 62 years |
| 1 year | 18 years | 12 years | 65 years |
| 2 years | 25 years | 13 years | 68 years |
| 3 years | 30 years | 14 years | 72 years |
| 4 years | 35 years | 15 years | 74 years |
| | | 16 years | 76 years |
| | | 17 years | 78 years |
| | | 18 years | 80 years |

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Feeding

Cats naturally exhibit carnivorous feeding behavior. Cats are primarily solitary hunter, whereas wild dogs hunt in packs.

There are 3 commonly used methods of feeding:

Free choice feeding: The cat eats as much or whenever it wants.

Time restricted feeding: The cat is allowed to eat as much as it wants within 5-30 minutes.

Food restricted feeding: The cat is fed only a certain amount no matter how much it desires to eat.

Free choice feeding is recommended unless obesity is a problem. If more than one cat is being fed they should have separate bowls placed far apart. Cats in the wild generally eat alone.

The cat by nature is a good eater. Finicky cats are made, not born.

The proper amount to feed a cat is whatever amount is needed to maintain optimal body weight and condition. Ask us at Stonebridge Animal Hospital for help.

Common feeding errors:

Feeding poor quality, low digestible diet.

Feeding too much vitamins, such as fish oil.

Feeding primarily or exclusively a single food item, such as liver, chicken or fish.

Feeding poultry or fish bones- they can splinter and damage the intestines.

Feeding dog food to cats- Dog foods do not contain Taurine, a special amino acid cats must have. The lack of Taurine in a cat's diet can cause blindness.

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Vaccination

Many serious infectious diseases of cats can be prevented by vaccinations. With over 50 million pet cats in the United States, your cat is quite likely to come in contact with an infectious disease at one time or another. Even indoor cats can be exposed to viruses carried in the air, on clothing or shoes.

Vaccination is inexpensive protection when compared to the costly treatment or premature death of your cat caused by an entirely preventable disease.

Feline Panleukopenia-

Also known as distemper, this disease is highly contagious and most often fatal. Symptoms include: loss of appetite, depression, fever, vomiting and diarrhea.

Feline respiratory diseases-

Feline respiratory diseases involve several different infections. They all are very contagious and are widespread. High death rates occur in very young and very old cats.

Rhinotracheitis: an upper respiratory virus that is similar to the human cold. Symptoms include: sneezing, runny nose and eyes, coughing. Mouth ulcers may present, causing drooling and refusal to eat.

Calicivirus: another virus with cold-like symptoms including: fever, runny nose and eyes, general depression and mouth ulcers.

Chlamydia: an upper respiratory infection caused by bacteria. Symptoms include: fever, nasal discharge, and conjunctivitis (eye infection).

Upper respiratory infections are easily spread from cat to cat. Even a stray cat that appears healthy can be a carrier that could infect your pet. The above diseases can be prevented by a vaccine that includes all of them in one injection. A series of injections is necessary to build the antibody protection needed to help your cat develop a high immunity against these diseases.

Feline leukemia: a virus that attacks the immune system. A cat can carry this virus for a very long time without showing any symptoms. It is deadly and there is no cure. As a cat could be a carrier and spread the disease to other cats, it is very important to both test for and vaccinate against feline leukemia.

FIV: Another deadly virus, FIV is very similar to HIV in humans. It attacks the immune system and eventually causes death. There is no cure. Cats can carry the virus for a very long time without showing symptoms. It is usually spread by a bite from an infected cat, so it is very important that outdoor cats be vaccinated for this disease. It is also very important that your cat is tested to be sure it doesn't carry the virus.

Rabies: A fatal infection of the nervous system that attacks all mammals, including humans. It is a public health hazard, and it is also your legal responsibility to vaccinate your pet.

Rabies is transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Even indoor cats could come in contact with a carrier in a basement, garage or attic.

There is no cure. Vaccination is very important for your safety as well as your pets' health.

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Spaying and Neutering

All pets should be spayed or neutered for many reasons. The ideal age is between 3-6 months.

Females: (spaying- ovariectomy)

Prevents signs of estrus (heat)

Decreases unwanted kittens

Decreases the chance of developing breast tumors later in life

Decreases the chance of cystic ovaries and uterine infections

Anesthesia is less of a risk at a younger age

Prevents breast development if done before breeding age

Females that are used for breeding should be spayed when no more litters are desired. We do not recommend any pet be bred after 6 years of age and all should be spayed by that time to prevent disease conditions such as uterine infections and breast tumors.

Males- (neutering- castration)

Decreases the desire to roam the neighborhood

Decreases aggression. More affectionate

Decreases incident of prostate cancer

Prevents odor of tom cat urine

Prevents tom cat spraying and marking of furniture and walls

Facts about spaying and neutering:

Neutering does not cause a pet to get fat or lazy. This comes from overfeeding and not enough exercise.

Personalities are not altered by neutering. Personalities can take up to two full years to fully develop, and neutering will only improve your pets' personality.

Surgical risk is very slight due to modern anesthesia and techniques. But there is always some small risk whenever anesthesia is used.

It is much easier on the pet to be spayed before going through a heat cycle, due to the smaller size of the reproductive tract.

The best age to spay or neuter is between 3-6 months.

Surgery is performed painlessly while your pet is under general anesthesia. Post-surgical pain is minimal, and most pets go home the same day the surgery is performed.

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Feline Leukemia and FIV

Feline leukemia and FIV are two deadly diseases that effect cats only. They are similar in that they both attack the immune system much like AIDS does in people. This makes the cat susceptible to respiratory infections, anemia, reproductive problems, cancer, etc.

As a cat can carry either of these viruses for months or even years, without showing any symptoms, it is **VERY IMPORTANT TO TEST YOUR CAT FOR BOTH DISEASES**. If your cat is a carrier it could spread the virus to any other cat it might come in contact with.

Feline leukemia is very contagious from cat to cat. It may be spread by licking, sneezing, fighting, sharing food bowls or sharing litter boxes. The virus is shed in saliva, urine, and feces. It can pass from a mother to her unborn kittens or to newborns via nursing. Even indoor cats should be vaccinated for Feline leukemia, as it is possible for the virus to be carried into the house on clothing or shoes.

FIV is usually spread by a bite from an infected cat. Any cat that may go outside, or is exposed to cats that go outside, should be vaccinated for FIV. The first time a cat is vaccinated for FIV it must have series of three injections. After that it is an annual vaccination.

There is no cure or successful treatment for either Feline leukemia or FIV. Many cats that are found to carry the virus are euthanized. There are some people that do keep infected cats, but they must use extreme caution to insure they don't inadvertently spread the virus to other cats.

It is highly recommended that any new cat being brought into a household that already has cats be kept separate until it can be tested for Feline leukemia and FIV.

While Feline leukemia and FIV are both very much like the AIDS virus, **THEY ARE NOT CONTAGIOUS TO PEOPLE**.

If you have any further questions regarding these deadly diseases, please feel free to call us.

Stonebridge Animal Hospital - (630) 420-8088