



Basics of Kitten Care

1. Vaccinations

Kittens require three (3) sets of initial vaccines given at about 8, 12, and 16 weeks of age (vaccines should not be given earlier than 8 weeks old). These vaccines are time sensitive and need to be done between 4-6 weeks of each other. The vaccines include: Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Feline Calicivirus, Feline Panleukopenia which are combined into one vaccine called FVRCP, as well as Rabies.



2. Deworming and Parasite Prevention

Kittens are typically born with intestinal parasites that are either spread from the mother during birth or nursing. It is recommended to have your kitten dewormed once monthly starting at 8 weeks of age and continued for 3-4 months in a row. Kittens that explore the outdoors are recommended to be on year-round parasite control as they may encounter parasites while outside such as internal parasites from the ground, or external parasites such as fleas and ticks. A fecal test will help us monitor if the deworming plan is working well or if the protocol needs to be adjusted with a different medication.

Common Types of Feline Intestinal Worms (Not to Scale)



FLEA



TICK

Fleas and ticks can also pose a threat even if your kitten is an indoor only pet and we recommend having them on a flea and tick preventative. These pests can make their way inside on other pets coming in from outdoors, people or rodents could carry them into your house, or your home might have been infested by fleas and/or ticks before you acquired your cat

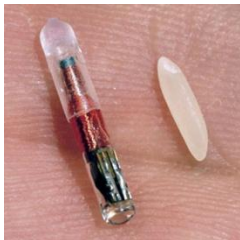
3. Nutrition

Once weaned from the mother, kittens no longer require her milk. It is recommended to have your kitten on a development kitten formula, as these foods are tailored specifically towards joint growth and health, as well as helping your kitten develop into a healthy adult cat. Kittens and cats do well on a mixture of both dry and wet food as some kittens and cats are not big water drinkers so the wet food adds moisture into their system. We recommend feeding your kitten Royal Canin, Hill's Pet Nutrition or Purina Pro Plan brands as they are the most reliable brands.



4. Spay/Neuter and Microchipping

Spaying and neutering can be done around 6 months of age unless otherwise specified by our veterinarian. A spay is a day procedure where a female cat undergoes a general anesthesia to surgically remove her ovaries and uterus so she will not be able to have kittens of her own. A neuter is also a day procedure where a male cat will have both testicles surgically removed so he will not be able to impregnate an intact female. Spaying and neutering also have multiple other health and social benefits including: eliminating the risks of developing ovarian and uterine or testicular cancers, reducing the chances of mammary or prostate cancer, decreasing the chances of them running away as they no longer have the need to search for a mate, as well as it can significantly help with their behavior such as reducing aggression and hormonal mood fluctuation.

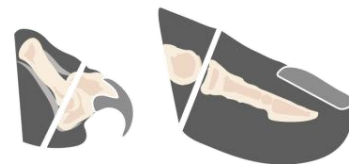


A Microchip can be implanted at the base of your kitten's neck, between the shoulder blades, under the skin. It is as small as a grain of rice and holds a unique number linked to your contact information which can be used to trace your beloved furry friend back to you to be reunited with your family in case of getting lost or escaping from home. Even though your cat may not go outside it is still possible that they accidentally run out the door while it is open, accidents do happen.

*A microchip compared to a grain of rice

Please Note:

Declawing cats is a cosmetic procedure which is equivalent to the amputation of the first knuckle of a human finger. It is an extremely painful procedure and can cause severe health concerns in the future. There are many ways to help prevent your cats from scratching on surfaces such as couches or curtains. This procedure is outdated and no longer recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.



*Cat declawing compared to a human finger

5. Desensitization, Enrichment, and Litter Box Training

Going to the veterinarian can be scary for some kittens. In order to have the best possible visit we recommend getting your new kitten used to people handling them in many ways. Make sure that you are touching their mouths, ears, paws, and tails so they don't develop any areas that they don't like having manipulated. We also recommend getting your kitten used to being in a carrier. Having your kitten used to being in a carrier can be invaluable. Your kitten may need to be in a carrier during vet visits, traveling, or an emergency situation and having them feel comfortable and not stressed in a carrier can help the situation.



Kittens are very active and love to explore everywhere and they like to sit up high. To help your kitten feel more comfortable you can have cat trees around your house especially facing the windows where there is wildlife (squirrels, birds etc.) so your kitten can have that mental stimulation they require to prevent boredom. Some toys that can help enrich your kitten's environment are plastic spring toys, crinkly balls, tunnels, and scratching posts.

Most of the time, kittens learn from their mother to use a litter box but make sure when you bring your new kitten home that they know where the litter box is in your house. Keep an eye on them and if needed, place them in the litter box and give a reward when you see them using it. Daily cleaning and scooping out the litter box is considered an essential part of a cat's husbandry.

Fun tip: Ensure you have 1 more litter box than you do cats. For example, if you have 2 cats you should aim for at least 3 litter boxes spread out around your house.

6. Safety

Kittens are very prone to chew cords or strings and ingest other objects because they love to explore their environment. Be sure to kitten proof your house and keep anything they could ingest tucked away where they are not able to get at it. Keep in mind that kittens love to climb so putting things on tables, counters, or high up isn't always the best solution. Also keep in mind your kitten's grooming needs as this can impact their health and well being. For dental care, we recommend brushing your kitten's teeth on a regular basis with pet safe toothpaste to help prevent dental disease when they get older. All kittens will need to have their nails trimmed every few weeks and many breeds will require regular grooming and brushing to prevent matting - especially if they have long or thick coats. As always, if you do have any concerns, be sure to reach out to your vet and make sure you are taking your kitten in for regular vet visits.



For more information on Kitten care check out our website: huroneastanimalhospital.com