



Your **New**
Kitten



Congratulations

Congratulations on the new addition to your family and thank you for choosing McLeod Veterinary Hospital. We hope that this information provides you with the appropriate tools to help guide and prepare you for life with your new kitten.



Vaccines

There are many viruses that are prevalent in Manitoba. Some of these viruses can survive in the environment and are not transmitted by contact with infected cats. Kittens obtain antibodies from their mother and vaccinating too early may not elicit the immune response required, therefore we recommend vaccinating healthy kittens at 8 weeks of age. It is also important to keep your kitten protected from these viruses until the series of vaccine boosters are complete. Protect your kitten by keeping them indoors and avoid interaction with other potentially unvaccinated cats. We vaccinate your kitten against the following diseases:

- **Rhinotracheitis:** A common herpes virus that affects respiratory and ophthalmic systems. Vaccinating reduces the severity of this highly contagious virus.
- **Calicivirus:** A virus that affects the respiratory system. Additionally this virus also affects the oral cavity and the musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal systems.
- **Panleukopenia:** A very severe virus that affects the immune system as well as gastrointestinal and nervous systems. This virus is extremely contagious and often fatal.

Protection from these viruses is provided in one vaccine (at 8 weeks) and it requires two additional boosters in kittens at 12 and 16 weeks

of age. In addition, there are other diseases that we vaccinate against.

- **Rabies:** A virus that enters the body through a wound and affects the nervous system. This virus is transmittable to humans.
- **Feline Leukemia:** A common virus that affects the immune system. Some cats have the potential to develop antibodies on their own post exposure, while others may succumb to leukemia related illness.

Any kittens or adult cats that have potentially been outdoors or exposed to other cats should have a blood test to determine if they have the following viruses:

- **Feline Leukemia:** This virus is transmitted through exposure to cat saliva (grooming), nasal secretions, from mother to kitten (in uterus, nursing), mating or sharing water and food dishes.
- **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus:** This virus also affects the immune system. This virus is transmitted through bite wounds, or from mother to kitten (in uterus, nursing). It may take 2 to 4 weeks following exposure for tests to detect this virus.

Because both of these viruses may be present without affecting the cat for a number of years it is important to test, especially when introducing a new cat to other cats in the household.

Deworming

Kittens are susceptible to various intestinal parasites. **Roundworm** is the most commonly diagnosed intestinal parasite in Manitoba. It is transmitted from mother to kitten in the uterus and while nursing. Roundworm can also be transmitted by ingesting contaminated soil. They have an elaborate life cycle and at the immature stage, will migrate throughout the body and may convert into a dormant phase that is resistant to medication.

The deworming medication we dispense will also treat other less prevalent intestinal parasites such as whipworm and hookworm. We dispense deworming medication for kittens at 8, 10 and 12 weeks of age, unless they were outdoors.

Although it is uncommon, roundworms can also be transmitted to humans. Children are most susceptible. It is important to promptly wash your hands after cleaning the litter box. Be aware that flower beds and sandboxes can be common areas where cats may void.

Tapeworm is another intestinal parasite that your cat can contract by hunting and ingesting birds, rabbits, rodents and fish. Cats that are infected with fleas can also contract tapeworm. Hunting cats are commonly infected with both roundworm (also contracted by hunting) and tapeworm. Outdoor cats should be dewormed

every 4-6 weeks. Please be aware that within Winnipeg city limits it is illegal to leave your cat outdoors to roam. It does pose greater risk to your cat for viruses, parasites, injury, poisoning and being struck by a vehicle.

Pet Insurance

You may want to consider pet insurance for your kitten. There are different insurance companies with different plans available. Refer to the following websites to determine if this is appropriate for you, and which coverage will best suit you: www.petsecure.com and/or www.vetinsurance.com

Spaying & Neutering

It is recommended to have your kitten spayed or neutered, by 6 months of age. There are medical and behavioral benefits for having this procedure done. Non-sterilized cats are predisposed to mammary tumors and uterine infections. They are also prone to undesirable behavioral problems such as roaming, inappropriate urination, and aggression towards other animals. Additional information is available, upon request, on this procedure.

Nutrition

Nutrition is an important factor affecting your kitten's health and development. Young kittens should be fed 4 meals per day. By 3 months of age they can be reduced to 3 meals per day.

It is important to provide your kitten with a growth formula. There are many diets available at grocery and pet stores however we only recommend diets that we are familiar with. The diets we recommend are nutritionally balanced using high quality ingredients, and have been researched and developed by a team of veterinarians. Kittens require high levels of protein, energy and minerals, and balanced levels of calcium and phosphorus and other nutrients. We can determine feeding amounts at each

visit to ensure your kitten will maintain an optimum body weight and condition. We can also recommend appropriate diets at different life stages specifically for your kitten.

In addition cats are very susceptible to diseases that can be prevented with a high quality well balanced canned food. Diabetes mellitus, urinary crystals, kidney disease, obesity and constipation are all attributed to low quality dry food diets. Canned food diets offer higher moisture content and higher protein levels than dry food. Both are important in keeping your kitten healthy. If offering any dry food to your kitten it is important to only offer a small meal.

General Grooming

Some longhaired breeds of cats require daily brushing to maintain their skin's health. Cats don't require frequent bathing. But be sure to use a gentle pet shampoo and always rinse thoroughly to prevent irritation. Soiled fur can be rinsed with warm water.

Nails require routine trimming. We can demonstrate how to do this during an appointment and we also offer this service.



Oral Health

As kittens develop they go through a painful teething process just like babies. It is very important to provide chew toys as this provides relief for them during this time. As adult teeth come in, the root of the temporary (deciduous) teeth are reabsorbed by the body and they fall out. All deciduous teeth should be gone by 5-6 months of age.

We encourage you to handle your kitten's mouth as this will allow them to be more

comfortable when the veterinarian examines their mouth. We also encourage you to attempt brushing your kitten's teeth. Periodontal disease is a natural process that occurs when oral health is neglected. Regular teeth brushing and routine dental cleanings can greatly decrease this disease process. For useful demonstrations and information on proper oral care refer to the following websites: www.toothvet.ca and/or www.vohc.org

Behavior

Stalking and pouncing are normal behaviors in kittens and they have an important role in their development. Be sure to provide appropriate toys to encourage these activities. Toys that are light weight and movable are a good choice. However, ensure they are large enough not to swallow. String and ribbon can cause serious gastric obstructions so be sure to avoid such materials.

It is important to have your house properly prepared for your new kitten. Kittens are very curious and like to investigate their surroundings. Numerous house plants are toxic to cats, yet they are often still attracted to eating them.

Ensure you have an appropriate litter box. Litter boxes should be large enough to accom-

modate an adult cat. It should be in a location that is easily accessible. Noises (such as the furnace) while your kitten is voiding may result in inappropriate urination. Litter boxes should be kept very clean. There should also be one litter box plus one, per cat in the household. Never disrupt nor discipline your cat while in the litter box.



Happy to Assist You

It is our hope that the information in this booklet has been helpful and will aid you and your family on this exciting new journey with your kitten. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please access the web links provided, or contact our hospital at **661-3334** and we will be happy to assist you. Have fun and enjoy your new kitten!

Hospital Hours:

Monday – Friday..... 8:00am to 9:30pm

Saturday & Sunday..... 8:30am to 3:00pm

Appointments are necessary.



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