

# Recommended Care For your Kitten

## **Vaccines:**

Just as in babies and children, vaccines for your kitten are important. Vaccines are designed to boost your cat's immune system. Cats are susceptible to many contagious diseases, most of which are caused by viruses. There are several vaccines available for cats. We recommend a series of "core" vaccines for all cats. These two vaccines include:

### 1. FVRCP (feline distemper/upper respiratory)

This vaccine protects your cat from feline viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Chlamydia and Panleukopenia (also known as feline distemper). These viruses/diseases can greatly affect your cat's health and can sometimes be fatal. The best prevention is proper vaccination. It is recommended to start this vaccine at 6-8 weeks of age and continue boosters every 3-4 weeks until your kitten is 16 weeks of age. After the initial series your cat should receive a booster vaccine once a year.

### 2. Rabies

Did you know that more cats are infected with rabies than any other domesticated animal? Rabies is a deadly virus that is secreted in saliva and usually transmitted through animal bites. This virus can affect all warm-blooded animals (including humans). The feline rabies vaccine is given once a year.

### Additional vaccines

The most common "non-core" vaccine available to cats is the Feline Leukemia vaccine. The feline leukemia virus is most commonly passed from cat to cat by direct contact and can affect many of the cat's various internal systems and is potentially fatal. This is a preventable disease through vaccination. This vaccine is recommended for cats who go outside or come into contact with cats who go outside. Cats can receive this vaccine as early as 9 weeks of age, with the initial series of two vaccines 3-4 weeks apart, then followed with annual vaccination to maintain protection.

### **FELV/FIV Testing:**

This is a simple blood test that screens cats for the Feline Leukemia Virus as well as the Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. These viruses can be transferred to kittens in-utero (through their mother) and also by contact with other cats who harbor the virus(es). Since most cats have an uncertain history (from shelters/barns/stray, etc.) we recommend testing all kittens for these viruses. This will help determine the long term health of the cat. It is also recommended to test cats after known/possible exposure (i.e. cat fight/bites).

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**Deworming:**

Kittens will commonly become infected with intestinal parasites through their mother's milk. There are several different intestinal parasites that your kitten could be exposed to. It is important to have a stool sample evaluated at each visit. This is the best method to determine what parasites your kitten may have. This will also help your veterinarian determine the proper deworming medication(s) needed to treat your kitten. Even if the stool sample does not show evidence of parasites, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends frequent deworming of kittens, for those parasites that can be transmitted to people.

**Microchipping:**

A microchip is a permanent form of identification. Placing a microchip is quick and easy. They are placed under the skin in the scruff of the neck. The microchip is about the size of a grain of rice and is placed with a needle, like a vaccine injection. We strongly recommend microchipping because if your pet is lost or stolen, a microchip may help him find his way home. Microchips stay with your pet even when tags and collars fall off. Most animal control facilities, veterinary offices, and humane societies routinely scan stray pets to look for microchips.