



So You've Got A New Kitten
There's a few things you should know:

VACCINATIONS

Because their immune systems are not fully developed, kittens are highly susceptible to disease during their first six months of life. To develop immunity against several serious illnesses, kittens need a series of vaccinations beginning at 6 to 8 weeks of age. Our hospital vaccinates against feline distemper (panleukopenia), feline leukemia, herpes and calici viruses, and rabies (see vaccination handout for more information). Our vaccine protocol is as follows, FCP at 8, 12, 16 weeks of age. Leukemia at 12, and 16 weeks. And rabies at 16 weeks.

DEWORMING

Kittens should be dewormed at the time of their first vaccinations. Most kittens are infested with roundworms, and tapeworms, Roundworms they often get from their mother. At our hospital, we treat Roundworms, tapeworms, hookworms and whipworms, with Milbemax (for kittens 6 weeks or older).

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

"Fixed" cats generally make better pets, as they are less likely to wander, spray urine, and fight. Spaying and neutering helps reduce the unwanted pet population, a serious problem in Canada. If you're thinking of breeding your cat, please remember that more than a million homeless dogs and cats are euthanized in Canadian animal shelters every year! Female cats may be spayed at 6 months of age, before their first heat cycle. We recommend fixing your cat at 6 months of age.

SCRATCHING

Cats and kittens need a scratching post to sharpen their nails and remove excess cuticle. Posts are available at most pet stores, or can be made. Train your kitten to scratch the post by dangling a cat toy over it, by rubbing or sprinkling it with cat nip, or by attaching toys to it. Discourage furniture scratching by squirting your cat with a water pistol or spray bottle as soon as it begins to scratch. Tacking inflated balloons to couches and chairs can also be effective, as the cat is frightened by the noise when the balloon pops. Furniture damage during training can be minimized by clipping the kitten's nails, or by applying "Soft Paws" (ask us about this if you're interested).

DE-CLAWING

In early 2019, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association banned de-clawing as well as other medically unnecessary surgical procedures. Please contact us to discuss alternatives.

Enjoy your kitten! If you have any questions or concerns, we'd be happy to talk about them!

VACCINATING YOUR CAT



The standard series of vaccinations at the Leduc Veterinary Hospital

Panleukopenia (Feline distemper)

Panleukopenia is an extremely contagious virus which is often fatal. The disease comes on very quickly, destroying the intestinal tract and the immune system. It typically produces a high fever, depression, diarrhea and vomiting. In kittens less than 3 months, it progresses so quickly that often few signs of illness are seen before death. If a mother cat is infected while pregnant; her kittens may be born with brain damage.

Feline Leukemia

Feline leukemia is a common cause of death in North American cats. The leukemia virus is transmitted by saliva and other bodily fluids. It attacks the immune system, producing a variety of different disease syndromes. These include leukemia (cancer of the white blood cells), autoimmune disease and increased susceptibility to infections. Symptoms include weight loss, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, or frequent infections. The disease is fatal, with most cats dying within 2 years of diagnosis. Cats which roam outdoors are most susceptible but indoor cats that come in contact with outdoor cats can get the disease.

Respiratory Viruses (Herpes and Calicivirus)

These viruses cause symptoms similar to the common cold in people. Typically we see sneezing, coughing, runny eyes and runny nose. Some animals will develop fevers, ulcers in the mouth or secondary bacterial infections. In the worst cases, the nasal passages are permanently damaged, turning the cat into a "snuffler". Such cats will snort, snuffle and snore all of their lives, and will always be susceptible to sinus infections, sore throats, sore eyes and pneumonia. Feline respiratory viruses can live dormant in infected cats for months to years, recurring in times of stress.

Rabies

Rabies is a fatal viral disease which can infect any warm blooded animals including humans. It is transmitted through saliva from bite wounds. Symptoms of rabies are varied, but a change in behavior or attitude is usually seen. Increased aggression, incoordination, drooling or gagging, paralysis, muscle weakness and depression are all signs which warrant investigation. Vaccination

has greatly reduced the incidence of rabies. However, the disease still occurs in wild animals, particularly skunks, bats and coyotes. Vaccination against rabies is boosted every year.

How to Encourage Your Cat to Drink Water

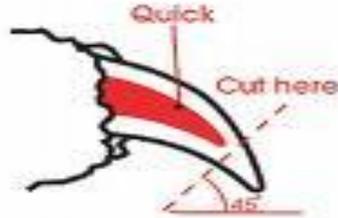


Because cats evolved in the desert, their bodies have adapted to living with very little water. Most of the water they consumed in ancient times came from eating their prey. Unfortunately, the water content of today's kitty kibble is next to nothing, resulting in a need for cat owners to encourage water consumption for overall health. Here are a few tips on how to do just that...

- Canned food is an excellent way to encourage water consumption. It is high in water content and most cats love the taste.
- Provide fresh water every day. Cats seem to be very aware of temperature and taste of water.
- Make sure the water bowl is full at all times.
- Some cats don't like the taste of tap water, you may wish to refrigerate the water to improve the taste, try bottled, distilled, or Brita water.
- Some cats enjoy ice cubes made from tuna or salmon broth mixed with water.
- If your cat prefers to drink from the tap, make sure it can always get to the tap. If your schedule permits, turn the tap on for the cat as often as possible throughout the day. Water fountains can be purchased as well.
- Keep food and water dishes away from the litter box.
- Keep the water bowl clean and use stainless steel or ceramic bowls. These are easier to clean and they are odor free unlike plastic dishes. The water dish should be washed at least every other day. Some cats seem to prefer a clear glass shallow bowl. Experiment with different types of bowls.

How to Trim Your Pet's Nails

Nail cross section



Your pet needs a manicure from time to time. Nails left too long can cause pain and lameness. It is also more likely that a long toe nail will get caught on something, break off and bleed.

Cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets, and guinea pigs can all be done much the same way.

1. Have someone hold your pet.
2. Use good quality trimmers. For very small pets, human nail trimmers can be used.
3. If you can see the quick (the pink part of the nail, which contains blood vessels), trimming will be easier to do. Just cut the nail 1/8 of an inch longer than the quick, where the nail is all white.
4. If your pet has black nails, cut the nail just above an imaginary line drawn from the bottom of the foot pad. To be safe, you can also just trim small bits of nail off at a time until you are more comfortable with trimming.
5. If the nail begins to bleed, apply pressure to the tip with a clean cloth or bandage for 1 to 3 minutes. There are products you can purchase which will stop the nail from bleeding, or you can try using a pinch of corn starch and pressure to stop the bleeding.

If you are having trouble trimming your pet's nails at home, our AHT's can do it for you, and show you how to do it until you are more confident in trimming them yourself.

DENTAL HOMECARE FOR YOUR PET



A routine program of dental care at home is required to ensure that your pet maintains a healthy mouth. Plaque is responsible for periodontal disease and starts to build up on teeth only 4-6 hours after a professional cleaning. Daily brushing is the best way to remove plaque from your pet's teeth. Special dental diets and treats are recommended to help reduce the formation of tartar. There are also products such as Chlorhexadine mouth rinse that can be used in the fight against periodontal disease.

For your pet we recommend a routine consisting of:

- Daily brushing with C.E.T. toothpaste and toothbrush or finger brush
- Chlorhexadine oral rinse
- Veterinarian recommended diet, and treats for your pet
- Routine annual oral exams with your veterinarian

Special Diets and Treats

- **Hills T/D:** A complete diet that uses a fiber matrix structure and large kibble size to remove tartar from teeth. It is most effective when used as a daily diet rather than a treat.
- **Medical Royal Canin Dental Formula:** A complete diet that has large kibble, and Sodium Hexametaphosphate, to reduce tartar formation. Hexametaphosphate is a safe food additive found in many edible products.
- **CET and Enzadent Chews:** These are once daily treats that contain enzyme systems designed to remove plaque and prevent the build up of bacteria.
- **Medi-treats:** Low Calorie, low fat, low sodium treats available for dogs and cats. These treats help control tartar build up.



Animal First Aid Kits

- Veterinarian's phone number/Emergency Clinic phone number
- First aid book for companion animals
- Latex gloves
- Gauze sponges
- Roll bandages
- Adhesive tape
- Non-adherent sterile pads
- Scissors
- Clippers
- Tweezers
- Baby dose syringe or eye dropper
- Water based lubricant
- Over the counter topical antibiotic ointment
- Sterile eye lubricant
- Sterile saline eye wash
- Materials to make a splint (stick, newspaper)
- Thermometer
- Towels
- 3% Hydrogen Peroxide

Remember: first aid kits are intended only for immediate, emergency action. They are for dealing with small scrapes, not illness or major injuries. Call your Veterinarian immediately for help and advice. Remember to read the labels for proper instruction when using medications.

HOW TO PUPPY AND KITTEN PROOF YOUR HOME

Kittens and puppies are naturally inquisitive, which can lead to serious injury. Here are some tips on how you can make your house safer for your new kitten or puppy.

-  Young animals love to chew things when they are teething. Keep electrical wires out of reach, or use a pet repellent spray that tastes bad...
-  Chocolate can be very dangerous. It contains Theobromine, a powerful stimulant that is toxic to animals. Sweets, cakes, and cookies can also lead to stomach upset and diarrhea and vomiting. This can lead to dehydration and is very serious.
-  Never give any type of bone to your pet. Turkey, chicken, and rib bones can splinter when chewed and swallowed, leading to serious injury.
-  Cleaning agents, bleach, ammonia, disinfectants, drain cleaner, oven cleaner, paint, gasoline, and rat poison are all common household dangers. Keep these items locked up. If you treat your lawn with chemicals keep your pets away.
-  Pets are attracted to the odor and sweet taste of antifreeze. Store antifreeze out of reach of your pets, and wipe up any spills. Window washing fluid also contains antifreeze. Remember, especially in the winter months, cats find warmth by climbing under the hood of cars. Honk your horn before starting the engine to wake any potential cats.
-  Kittens and Puppies can be mischievous, and dig in potted plants or chew and eat the leaves. Many house plants are poisonous. These include philodendron, dieffenbachia, elephant ear, eucalyptus, spider plants, azalea, ivy, amaryllis, pyracantha, oleander, boxwood, Jerusalem cherry and plant bulbs, holly, and mistletoe, and many more!
-  Keep personal care items and medications away from pets. Cosmetics, shampoos, hair products, lotions and medications such as Tylenol, sleeping pills, aspirin, and antihistamines can be fatal if your pet ingests them.
-  Watch out for hazards such as, balloons, rubber bands, sewing needles and thread, and children's toys. Often these types of objects require surgical removal if ingested.