



TIPS FOR A HEALTHY KITTEN

Congratulations on your new kitten! Owning a kitten is a wonderful experience, but also a great responsibility. Here are some things that you should know in order to keep your kitten happy and healthy:

FELV TESTING

All kittens should be tested for feline leukemia. Early detection of this infection will help you maintain the health of your cat as well as allow you to prevent the infection from spreading to others. A negative FeLV test result gives one less thing to worry about with your new addition.

VACCINATIONS

Kittens should begin a series of vaccinations at 6-8 weeks of age. In order to be fully protected, a young kitten will need to obtain two to three sets of vaccinations at three-week intervals. For example, a kitten that receives its first set of shots at 7 weeks of age will also need vaccinations at 10, and 13 weeks of age. A kitten who has had only one set of vaccinations is NOT protected against common feline diseases. Be aware that if you begin a series of vaccinations but do not return for the follow-up booster vaccinations on time, you may need to start the series over again. At Timpanogos Animal Hospital, we recommend a combination vaccine for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Chlamydia, and Panleukopenia, as well as individual Rabies and Feline Leukemia (FeLV) vaccinations.

PARASITES

The presence of roundworms is extremely common in kittens. For this reason, we administer an inexpensive yet effective dewormer to all kittens on their first and second visits. The third time that we see your kitten, we can perform a fecal flotation test to ensure that there are no resistant roundworms. Our routine kitten dewormer does not kill tapeworms, which cats may get from catching mice or birds. If you see small white rice-like segments near your pet's perineum, we can prescribe a different dewormer for this problem.

SPAYING/NEUTERING

Pets should be spayed or neutered after they have completed all of their vaccinations, around 4-5 months of age. It is best to wait until your kitten has had all of his vaccinations because this will reduce the possibility of your kitten contracting an infectious disease while hospitalized or recovering from surgery.

It is strongly recommended that a female cat be spayed prior to her first heat cycle. A female cat that is spayed before her first heat cycle has virtually no chance of developing mammary tumors during her life. This benefit is reduced each time that she goes through a heat cycle. Spaying also prevents uterine infections, unwanted pregnancies, the trouble of other cats coming around, and the annoying crying sounds she will make when she is in heat.

Neutering male cats reduces urine odor, fighting, roaming, and urine-marking. Decreasing the roaming instinct helps keep pets closer to home, and minimizes their chances of getting lost or hurt, as well as decreasing their chances of contracting serious viral diseases such as FeLV, FIV, and FIP.

FEEDING

We recommend that kittens be fed Science Diet Growth food until they are ten months to one year of age. Kittens can be fed free-choice but should only be given the amount of food suggested on the bag of food.

This will help to prevent obesity since you are in control of how much your pet is eating. Be sure to have fresh, clean water available at all times.