

Kitten Care

Vaccination

Kittens require a series of vaccinations to protect them against some common infections which can be fatal. Cats then require an annual booster vaccination to continue this protection.

- * 6-8 weeks - F3 vaccination + FIV vaccine
- * 12 weeks - F3 vaccination + FIV vaccine
- * 16 weeks - F3 vaccination + FIV vaccine

The F3 protects against: Panleucopenia virus which causes Feline Enteritis; and Rhinotracheitis virus and Calicivirus which both cause Cat Flu. FIV is recommended for all cats that have access to outdoors.

Feline AIDS

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus causes "Cat AIDS", a potentially fatal disease that interferes with the immune system of cats. The virus is carried in the bloodstream and is usually transferred by biting during cat fights. Infected cats can remain healthy for up to 10 years, spreading the virus. A vaccination against FIV is now available in Australia. Cats require 3 initial vaccinations with an interval of 3 weeks between the injections. Cats then require an annual vaccination to continue their protection.

Heartworm

Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes, so your kitten does not need to be in contact with other cats to become infected. The worms live inside the heart and can grow to 20cm in length, interfering with circulation and eventually causing heart failure and death. Generally there are no outward signs of the disease until it is quite advanced and although there are treatments available the disease is usually still fatal as the damage to the heart is permanent. Kittens should start heartworm prevention at 12 weeks of age. There are several different monthly "spot-on" products available, most of which protect against a range of other parasites as well. Because there are no tablets involved, these products are very easy to use.

Worming

Intestinal worms can be transmitted from cats to humans, especially children and can cause serious health problems. Kittens can be born with intestinal worms or pick them up from their mother soon after birth and if left untreated, can be fatal. There are several different worming preparations available, including tablets, pastes and the more convenient "spot-ons". The frequency with which these need to be given differs between products, but all kittens should be wormed regularly from 4 weeks of age. Please note that not all worm preparations are effective against all types of worms.

Fleas

Fleas can cause skin disease, anaemia and tapeworm infestation in your kitten. Washes, powders and collars generally only kill the fleas that are on the animal at the time of application and before long a flea infestation builds up again from an infested environment. There are a number of excellent "spot-on" preparations that are very effective, last for a whole month and kill fleas before they can even bite your cat.

Feeding

Kittens need extra calcium and phosphorus when they are growing, to develop healthy bones and

muscles. A good quality "kitten" food will have these added nutrients in the correct ratio and should make up at least 2/3 of your kitten's diet. Cats need to eat kitten food until they are 6 months of age.

RAW chicken necks and chicken wings can be fed from an early age as chewing helps maintain healthy teeth and gums. NEVER FEED COOKED BONES. Chocolate, onion, garlic, grapes and fatty food should not be fed to cats, as these may have fatal consequences.

Desexing

We recommend that male and female cats are desexed at 5-6 months of age. There are several important reasons for this:

- * Reduces the risk of unwanted pregnancy and the number of unwanted kittens
- * Makes cats less territorial. This can reduce urine spraying and territorial fighting, especially in male cats
- * Reduces the risk of mammary tumours and eliminates the risk of uterine infections in females
- * Eliminates the risk of testicular tumours in males

Female cats start to come into season from 6 months of age depending on the time of year. Cats tend to breed more during spring. We do not recommend that female cats come into season first before being spayed.