

Superior Animal Hospital & Boarding Suites, Ltd.

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KITTEN CARE (9/11)

Thank you for trusting the staff at Superior Animal Hospital to care for your kitten. The following information lists some general recommendations and suggestions we have for your new pet.

NUTRITION: Your kitten will grow to reach maturity during its first year of life. Proper nutrition is important to meet its needs during this time of rapid change.

We recommend: 1. **Science Diet Feline Growth**, or other premium kitten food.

2. Fresh water; some cats prefer running water to bowls. The more cats drink, the better.
3. **NO TABLE FOOD or MILK.** These items can cause constipation or diarrhea, lead to excessive weight gain, predispose to urinary tract disease, as well as create behavioral problems.
4. Meals in measured amounts fed 2 to 4 times a day, depending on the age of the kitten. Feeding measured meals is helpful in preventing obesity.

VACCINATIONS: Many fatal diseases can be prevented with timely vaccinations.

- We recommend:
1. Vaccination for Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia (distemper) (**FVRCP**) given 3 to 4 weeks apart through 16 weeks of age. The first set may be given as early as 6 to 8 weeks of age. Typically kittens get 2 to 4 of these vaccines during their kitten series and is required for surgery and for boarding. This vaccine needs to be boosted annually.
 2. **Feline Leukemia (FeLV)** vaccination given 3 to 4 weeks apart, beginning as early as 9 weeks of age. This vaccine is highly recommended because it is a commonly diagnosed and fatal disease. It is boosted annually.
 3. **Rabies** vaccine after 12 weeks of age, many times on the last kitten visit. This vaccine is required by law in the City of Duluth; it is good for 1 year and subsequent vaccinations are good for 2 years.

***Please consult with our doctors & staff to determine an appropriate immunization schedule for your kitten.

VIRAL TESTING

If your new kitten or cat has been a stray or will be in contact with other cats, we HIGHLY recommend screening for **Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)** and **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)**. These viral infections are contagious, and once a cat is infected, these diseases are usually fatal.

EXAMINATIONS

Your kitten will receive a complete physical exam at the time it is vaccinated. Exams help determine if there are congenital, hereditary, or developmental problems that exist. We try to make visits as informative for you and fun for your kitten as possible. **Please** invest in a cat carrier for trips to the hospital. Confining your kitten decreases anxiety, keeps them safe during transport, prevents escapes, and makes car driving safer.

SURGERY

We recommend your female kitten be spayed or male kitten be neutered between 4 and 6 months of age. Alteration surgeries help avoid unwanted pregnancies, territorial urine marking, heat cycles, as well as other medical and behavioral problems. We require the final **FVRCP** vaccine be given at least 1 week prior to scheduled surgery.

Declaw surgery can be performed as early as 3 months of age and can be combined with the spay or neuter surgery. Some kittens can be trained to use a scratching post, thus avoiding the need for surgery. **Soft Paws** nail caps can be applied, also eliminating the need for declawing. We have a specific handout on options available for destructive scratching in cats.

PERMANENT IDENTIFICATION

We recommend the **Home Again Microchip** for permanent identification. The microchip can be easily and painlessly placed under the skin at the time your pet is spayed or neutered.

GROOMING

All grooming procedures are best introduced when the kitten is young so they learn to tolerate being handled. Nails should be trimmed. Brushing your kitten's haircoat helps control shedding, decreases hairballs, and improves skin condition. Ear cleaning can be done as needed with recommended products and techniques. Your kitten may be bathed and some cats even like it! We recommend **EpiSoothe Shampoo**.

DENTAL CARE

Kittens generally begin losing their baby teeth at 4 months of age. Proper dental care helps control bad breath, tartar buildup, gum disease, cavities, and tooth loss.

We recommend:

1. Brushing the teeth daily using recommended products; introduction to brushing the teeth develops the routine and increases the pet's tolerance of touching around the mouth.
2. Feeding primarily dry food.

PARASITES

Parasites can be a common problem in kittens.

We recommend:

1. Checking a stool specimen microscopically (fecal exam) for intestinal parasite eggs at the time of your kitten's first or second visit. If the kitten has recently received deworming medication, we may recommend rechecking the stool again.
2. Ears checked closely for mite infection during its examination.
3. Monitoring closely for fleas, especially in late summer and fall. We have safe products to keep fleas from overwhelming your kitten and home. **Frontline Plus** and **Revolution** applied monthly will treat and prevent fleas; **Revolution** also treats and prevents ear mites and intestinal parasites, and is a heartworm preventative.
4. Monitoring for tapeworm segments on the hairs around the tail. This parasite does not always show up on the microscopic stool exam. If your kitten has fleas or hunts rodents, deworm for tapeworms every 3 to 4 months with **Praziquantal**.

BEHAVIOR & TRAINING

1. Litter boxes are generally well accepted by most kittens. Consider the following tips:

1. Confine kitten with box initially.
2. Provide easy access in a quiet location.
3. Use unscented litter, either scoopable or regular.
4. Clean or scoop the box daily.
5. The number of boxes recommended by experts is one per cat plus one (i.e. 2 cats = 3 boxes).

The key to preventing bad litter box behavior is: **Do not give the kitten any reasons for not wanting to use the box.** Pregnant women should be cautious cleaning litter boxes because of Toxoplasmosis; it is best to have a non-pregnant family member clean and change the litter box.

2. Do not play aggressively with kittens; some will learn this behavior and escalate as adults. It then won't be so cute. Redirect the play behavior away from hands and body (fetch, fishing pole-type toys, etc.)

PET INSURANCE

Medical insurance for pets can be of great benefit to you and your pet. Plans through **Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI)**, **Trupanion** or **Purina Care** makes insurance an affordable option and assures that you will financially be able to take care of any medical problems that may arise.

If you have any questions about your pet, please call us at 392-6211.