



Kitten Health Care

All kittens need some basic care to keep them healthy. Start things off right to give them the best head start. Here is an overview of what they need.



Vaccinations

Distemper/upper respiratory combination is given at 8, 12, and 16 weeks of age (at least 2 need to be given regardless of age) and is recommended for all kittens. After this first series, the distemper/upper respiratory combination vaccination is given every 3 years.

Rabies is given at 3-4 months or older and is legally required for all cats. The first rabies vaccine is good for 1 year. After that, your cat can have a rabies vaccine that lasts for 3 years.

Leukemia is given at 8 and 12 weeks. For indoor only cats, this vaccine does not need to be continued. Outdoor cats will be vaccinated every 3 years.

Feline Leukemia and FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) Test

This test is recommended for all kittens because they are fatal diseases. It is recommended before starting the leukemia vaccine because the vaccine can cause a false positive test result meaning the test seems to show leukemia but it's due to the vaccine and not disease.

Nutrition

Kittens should be fed 2-4 meals per day, depending on their age. Foods labeled for kittens have higher energy for their growing bodies. There are many high quality foods available. All cats must be fed some kind of meat for a protein source (they cannot be vegetarians).

Spay and Neuter

Kittens can be spayed or neutered at 4 to 6 months of age. Females are less likely to develop mammary tumors and males are less likely to spray if they are spayed and neutered at a young age. This is also a great time to place a microchip for identification.

Parasites

All kittens should be treated for roundworms. A stool sample should be checked at the first appointment and then 1 month later or after treatment. All kittens should be treated with flea and heartworm prevention monthly.



Have You heard the News?

Yes, cats get heartworms!

Grooming

All kittens need to get used to being brushed. This is especially important if your kitten will have long hair. Flea combs are also useful to check for fleas and remove them.



Nails grow quickly and should be trimmed regularly. Training them to allow nail trims at this age will make it easier as they get older.

Dental Care

Your kitten's permanent teeth will come in between 3 ½ months and 7 months. Cats can have the same dental problems that humans have so it is important to brush their teeth regularly. This works best if you start when they are kittens. Other options include a special diet made for dental care or dental chews and treats. Both, when given daily, help decrease tartar build-up. However, professional cleanings will be necessary as your kitten gets older to maintain good health.

Litter Box

Even young kittens will use a litter box. Locate the box where the kitten can easily find it and clean it frequently. There should be 1 box for every cat in the household plus one extra. If you have 3 cats, you should have 4 boxes.