

CHURCH STREET

VETERINARY HOSPITAL



KITTEN CARE GUIDE

KITTY'S FIRST YEAR.

Age	Date	Weight	Procedure
2 weeks			Worming
4 weeks			Worming
6 weeks			Worming Microchip
8 weeks			Worming Vaccination Flea treatment
10 weeks			Worming
12 weeks (3 months)			Worming Vaccination Flea treatment Desexing just prior to 4 months
16 weeks (4 months)			Worming Vaccination Flea treatment
20 weeks (5 months)			Worming Flea treatment
24 weeks (6 months)			Worming Flea treatment
7 months			Flea treatment
8 months			Flea treatment
9 months			Worming Flea treatment
10 months			Flea treatment
11 months			Flea treatment
12 months			Worming Flea treatment

**Note: After your cat reaches 12 months worming should be continued on a quarterly basis (the change of season is a good reminder for the timing of worm treatments).
Vaccinations should continue annually.**

VACCINATIONS.

Why should I vaccinate my kitten?

Vaccinations give the best all round protection against deadly infectious diseases. Vaccinations stimulate the immune system to be able to fight the virus if your cat is exposed.

To stimulate a complete resistance, vaccinations normally need to be given more than once. A vaccination program is worked out for your cat at the first visit depending on the age of your cat and any prior vaccinations.

What diseases do we vaccinate against?

Feline infectious Enteritis (Parvovirus, Panleucopenia Virus)

This virus can cause severe vomiting and bloody diarrhoea. There is no cure, only supportive treatment involving intensive care in hospital. Despite treatment, infection often results in death. The virus is highly contagious and is spread by particles originating from faeces. It can be carried on shoes, clothing or by flies. The virus survives for a long time in the environment even after the faeces have been cleaned away.

Feline Calicivirus

Part of the cat flu complex. Cats and kittens can be infected with the virus and show no signs until they are in a stressful situation like moving to a new home or boarding. This virus causes sneezing, conjunctivitis and ulcers on the tongue and gums.

Feline Rhinotracheitis (Feline Herpes Virus)

Part of the cat flu complex. This virus is highly contagious and can cause severe disease including death in young kittens. This virus also causes sneezing and conjunctivitis as well as loss of appetite. It can lead to development of permanent nasal and sinus infections.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

This virus is like the human HIV. We are more likely to see infection with this virus in outdoor cats that fight or are attacked by other cats as the virus is spread through bite wounds. Infected cats may appear normal for many years before any signs of sickness are noticed. As the immune system deteriorates the cat will become unable to protect itself against infections and will be more susceptible to bacteria, viruses, and fungal infections.

Basic kitten vaccination schedule

- First vaccination at 8 weeks
- Booster vaccination at 12 weeks
- Annal booster vaccination every year after final kitten vaccination

If you would like your kitten protected against FIV, an additional vaccination will be needed at 10 weeks.



PARASITES.



Fleas



Intestinal Worms



Mites



Intestinal Worms

There are four different worms that we regularly worm against that live inside your pet's intestines. Roundworms and tapeworms are the only worms that can be seen in your pet's faeces. To diagnose whipworm and hookworm infections we must examine a sample of faeces under the microscope.

Roundworms are thin, white worms that can be either passed in the faeces or vomited up if the infection is severe. All kittens are considered to carry these worms as they can pass through the placenta from the mother to the puppies whilst the kittens are still in the uterus. As the worms develop, they pass through the lungs and liver and can often cause damage to these organs as they make their way to the intestine.

Roundworm eggs can infect by humans, especially children and can, in a small number of cases, cause damage to the child's eyes. Hence it is particularly important to worm kittens regularly and to ensure that good hygiene is maintained by washing hands after handling kittens.

Hookworms are tiny worms that use hooks in their mouth to attach to the lining of the intestine where they suck blood and cause bleeding. Kittens with hookworm infections shown signs of bloody diarrhoea, anaemia, chronic illness, and sometimes sudden death. Hookworm eggs are passed in the faeces and then hatch into larvae that can live in the environment for many months. The larvae can penetrate the skin of kittens and can cause damage to various internal organs as they make their way to the intestines.

Adult **whipworms** live in the intestine and cause chronic inflammation of the bowel. Kittens shown signs of general ill health and chronic diarrhoea. Whipworm eggs are passed in the faeces and are very resistance in the environment living for up to seven years.

Tapeworms can be transmitted to your pet through fleas or by eating raw offal from farm animals. They both live in the intestines and you may notice segments of the tapeworm being passed as flat white segments about the size of a grain of rice. Fleas can carry up to fifty tapeworm eggs, these can be swallowed by your pet during grooming. Tapeworms that are contracted from eating raw offal pose a serious health risk to humans.



Fleas

Whilst fleas are mostly a problem in the warmer months it is important to continue your flea control program throughout the whole year. Flea populations can build rapidly to plague-like proportions under the right conditions. Adult fleas live and feed on your pet but 95% of the flea population live as eggs, larvae and pupae in the dirt, carpet, bedding and crevices around your house and yard.

Fleas can cause itching, scratching, skin allergies, dermatitis, anaemia and transmit tapeworms. They can bite humans as well. All fleas must be removed from the dog and its environment, including other household pets. There are many safe and effective products available for killing fleas and for preventing re-infestation occurring.



Ticks

There are two main types of ticks that you may see on your kitten at some time during its life, these are the Paralysis tick and the Brown dog or Bush tick.

Paralysis ticks are frequently carried by native animals that are mostly immune to the tick's toxin. When the paralysis tick feeds on your cat it injects a neurotoxin into the bloodstream that builds up on the nerves of the spinal cord. This leads to signs of hindlimb weakness/paralysis and a wobbly gait, you may notice a change in your cat's meow, vomiting and collapse. If left untreated it can lead to death.

If you suspect your cat has a paralysis tick bring them into the clinic immediately. If you find a tick on your cat it is important to remove it straight away as the longer it is on your cat the more toxin it can inject into your cat. Use a pair of tweezers or your fingers and grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and with a swift pull remove the tick. Do not worry about leaving the head behind, it does not have one! Paralysis ticks are slate grey in colour and have 1 brown leg, 2 white legs and another brown leg on either side of the body.

Brown dog ticks do not cause paralysis however they can cause a local irritation and in large enough numbers can lead to anaemia (lack of blood) making your cat feel very weak and lethargic. They also carry many zoonotic diseases or diseases that affect people.

Brown dog or bush ticks are brown or grey in colour and have 4 brown legs on either side of the body.

Ask our team about the best parasite prevention product for your kitten!

FEEDING.

Good nutrition is vital at this age when bones are quickly growing. A kitten food is recommended. These diets are specially formulated to contain the right balance of nutrients, significantly calcium, and a high-quality diet means it is readily digestible (undigested food results in soft, smelly faeces, and flatulence).

There are many different brands of premium pet foods. Tinned food contains the same nutrients as dry food, just more water. Dry food is easier to store and often more economical, however, your cat may prefer tinned food. Cats do not usually drink very much water and tend to be a little dehydrated most of the time. Including tinned food in their diet is a good way to increase their liquid intake and reduce this dehydration. Cats often will like to chew on a small bone like a raw chicken wing, this helps to keep teeth clean.

Ask our helpful team at Church Street Vets for more advice on feeding your kitten.



How often should you feed your kitten?

As a rule, we recommend the following feeding regime:

Kittens up to 12 weeks of age: feed 3-4 meals each day

12 weeks to 6 months of age: feed 2-3 meals each day

Over 6 months of age: feed 1-2 meals each day

It is important to space meals evenly throughout the day and always provide plenty of fresh clean water for drinking.

Foods to avoid:

The following foods are toxic to cats and should be avoided:

- Onions
- Garlic
- Chocolate
- Coffee or caffeine products
- Bread dough
- Grapes, raisins, sultanas, and currants
- Cooked bones, small pieces of raw bone and fatty trimmings
- Alcohol
- Human medicines



If your kitten has or possibly has consumed any of the items on the list above, contact us immediately.



(02) 6372 6780



Dental disease is one of the most common problems affecting cats and dogs today. Plaque builds up in our pets' mouths and becomes hard tartar/calculus if it is not removed. To avoid this from happening we recommend chewing on hard biscuits, chew toys or even raw meaty bones.



Dental care is especially important for a happy, healthy cat. Cats normally have white teeth, pink healthy gums and a 'fishy' breath that is not unpleasant to smell. As our cats age we often see a build-up of plaque that becomes tartar, especially along the gum line. Plaque is bacteria and the toxins produced can lead to kidney and heart problems for your cat. This bacteria can cause infection around the tooth roots leading to erosion of the gums and bones of your cat's jaws, this is called periodontal disease. Some cats show no signs other than a foul-smelling breath; others have difficulty eating and may salivate (drool) copiously. Most just suffer in silence.

Your veterinarian often notices dental disease at your cat's annual health check. Your cat will have its mouth examined and we will let you know if there is any build-up of plaque or inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) that needs to be removed or treated. To be able to remove the plaque build-up it will be necessary to give your cat a general anaesthetic. We use an ultrasonic scaler to remove the tartar from your cat's teeth and below the gum line. We then polish your cat's teeth with a special paste to ensure that the teeth are smooth, making it harder for plaque to build up again. Sometimes we must remove teeth if they are in extremely poor condition, loose or broken.

After a dental procedure we might recommend feeding soft food for a couple of days (if we removed any teeth), brushing regularly, chewing special treats or even a special dental diet.



HOUSE TRAINING.

Once your kitten is old enough to move freely around your house, it will need to be house trained. This can be done over a period with careful supervision, consistency and rewards.

Kittens generally want to go to the 'toilet' when they wake up, within 30 minutes of eating or drinking and about every two hours.

When your kitten starts the 'I want to go to the toilet' routine – whining, walking around in circles or sniffing the ground. Take them to where you want them to toilet, either outside or on a piece of paper or litter in a corner of a room. When they have toileted given them a lavish praise in the form of a food reward or lots of cuddles. This will encourage them to repeat the behaviour.

A few points to remember:

- If you do not see your kitten, do not punish them, they won't know what they did wrong.
- Do use lots of praise when they do something right.



DESEXING.

Desexing, spaying, neutering, castration – all are different ways of saying the same thing. This procedure involves a day stay for your pet, a general anaesthetic and surgery to permanently stop your cat being able to reproduce. Desexed animals generally live longer than undesexed animals and are often healthier.

We recommend desexing your cat just before they reach 4 months to take advantage a cheaper pet registration fee.

Female Cats

Cats are called 'seasonal breeders'. This means that when the days are getting longer during spring and early summer they come onto heat. This heat cycle can last for as little as 9 days from start of one heat or 'call' to the start of the next. This continues throughout the lengthening days until the female cat is either mated or desexed.

To desex or spay a female cat an ovariohysterectomy is performed. This involves removing both ovaries and the uterus. There are a few stitches that will have to be removed in about 14 days. Benefits of desexing include:

- The hormones produced by the ovaries when your cat is on heat affect the uterus and mammary tissues. In some cats this can lead to mammary tumours when they are older.
- Desexed females do not have problems with unwanted pregnancies and unwanted kittens.

Male Cats

To desex or neuter a male cat a castration is performed. This involves removing both testicles. As the incision is small, there are no stitches that need to be removed. Advantages of desexing include:

- Reduces the risk of prostate cancer and prevents testicular cancer.
- Undesexed or entire male cats can become aggressive towards other cats, urine mark their territory, wander or run away looking for female cats in heat or season, develop thickened necks and have a strong pungent smell to them.
- Desexed cats cannot cause unwanted litters.

? Myths & Facts

MYTH:

Desexing your cat will change its personality

FACT:

This procedure will only change your cat's behaviour for the better. Once they mature, undesexed male and female cats become consumed with finding a mate which can cause undesirable behaviours such as roaming the neighbourhood for a mate or competition which exposes them to the risk of contracting Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) and other diseases.

MYTH:

Females should have a litter before they are desexed.

FACT:

This is not true for your pet's health. In fact, spaying a cat before her first heat will greatly reduce the risk of diseases relating to the reproductive organs.

MYTH:

Desexing will cause my pet to become overweight.

FACT:

Desexing is typically done at an age when rapid kitten growth is decreasing, and diet control is necessary. However, overfeeding and lack of exercise are the culprits if your pet is gaining weight, not desexing.

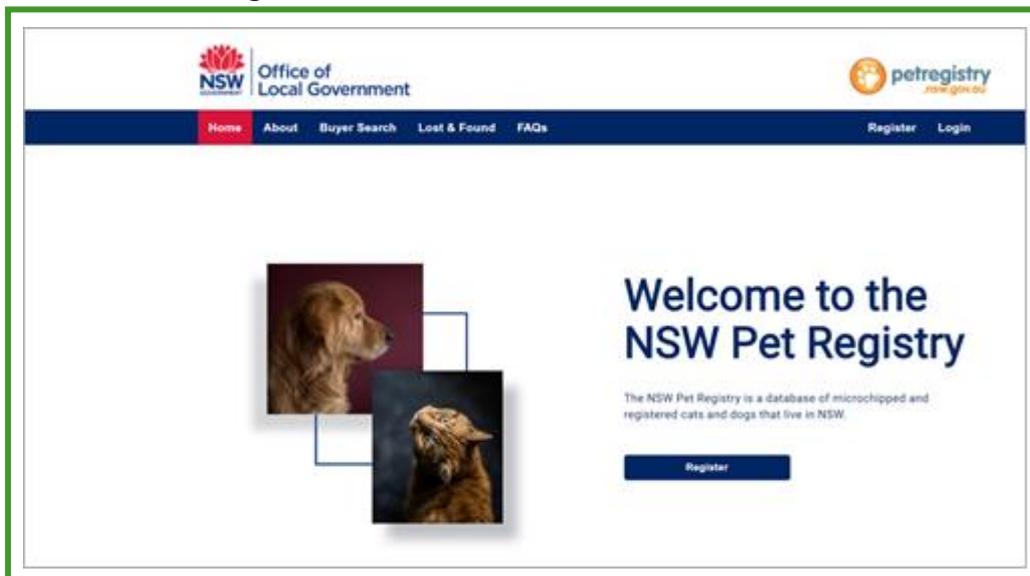
MICROCHIPPING.

Microchipping is now compulsory for pets in most parts of Australia. The best motivation for having your puppy microchipped is that it is the best way of identifying your pet and having it returned to you if it gets lost.

The microchip is about the size of a grain of rice, it is implanted under the skin between the shoulder blades and does not cause any irritation or discomfort. Each microchip has its own unique fifteen-digit number. All veterinary hospitals and council pounds have access to the microchip database that enables them to be able to identify an animal and return lost pets to their owner.



It is important to keep your details up to date on the pet registry register and on our files. If you have moved since having your kitten microchipped, you can either fill in a change of ownership form to hand into council or online via the NSW pet registry website once you have created a login.



Visit the NSW pet registry at: <https://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au> to register your pet and keep its details up to date.

Even if your kitten is registered make sure they always have a collar and tag with your contact details on it so they can be easily returned to you if they get lost. Bow Wow Meow is an online store where you can purchase your puppy a personalized tag. Simply come into the clinic to purchase a voucher to use online.

