



CLOCKHOUSE

VETERINARY PRACTICE & HOSPITAL



KITTEN

INFORMATION PACK

# Treatments Available for your Kitten

## Vaccinations - Primary Course

The primary course vaccinates against feline leukaemia virus, cat flu (feline viral rhinotracheitis and feline calicivirus) and feline panleucopenia virus. For your kitten to be fully vaccinated, it requires two vaccinations at the following intervals. Your kitten is not fully protected until two weeks after the 2nd vaccination.

### Age

#### 9 weeks of age

#### 1st vaccination, plus

- Flea prevention and worming treatment
- 4 week FREE Petplan insurance cover
- Introduction to benefits of Paws & Claws club
- Information pack
- Socialisation tips from the nurse
- Option to set up FREE text reminders

#### 12 weeks of age 2nd vaccination

*If your kitten is older than 9 weeks when the 1st vaccination is given, there will need to be a three week interval before the 2nd vaccination.*



## Flea Prevention and Worming

From 6 weeks of age we recommend Stronghold spot on monthly for flea prevention and roundworm treatment. Once your kitten starts exploring the great outdoors, tapeworm treatment with Droncit at least every 3 months. We recommend these treatments are continued throughout your cat's life to prevent tapeworms (for human safety as well as their own health) and fleas in your home. Other treatment options are available and a member of the nursing team will be happy to discuss them with you in more detail.

## Neutering

From 5-6 months of age both male and female kittens can be neutered, depending on their weight. Please speak to a member of staff for further details.

## Pet Passport

Preparations for a pet passport can be started from 3 months of age. Please ask one of our Vets or Consulting Nurses for details.

## Microchip Identification

This can be done at any age, dependent on the kitten's size. If your kitten is going to be neutered it is worth considering having this done at the same time. Please ask a Nurse for details.

## Regular Visits

Regular visits help your kitten get used to us, our hospital and the journey, so we offer FREE regular appointments with our Consulting Nurses to check your kitten's weight and development.

## Further Information on Vaccinations for Adult Cats

A yearly booster, required to maintain immunity, is a good chance for your cat to receive a full clinical examination and an opportunity for you to discuss any health care matters with the Vet. *If the booster is overdue by more than 3 months it is normally necessary to restart with a primary course of two injections.*

**Panleucopaenia:** a virus causing severe, often fatal gastro-enteritis. It can affect unborn kittens of infected queens. Passed in the faeces of infected cats.

**Feline Herpes Virus and Feline Calici Virus:** the two main causes of cat flu. Spread by sneezing.

**Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV):** mainly spread through fighting as it's present in the blood, saliva and urine of infected animals. An infected cat can harbour the virus for months/years without showing any symptoms. The virus can cause a type of cancer called 'lymphoma' and damage the immune system, leading to other infections, gingivitis and diarrhoea. As it is possible to have the virus without any clinical signs, in some cases (e.g. stray cats, bad fighters or kittens born to stray cats) a blood test may be advisable before vaccination.

**Rabies:** in order to obtain a pet passport cats have to be identified with a microchip and then vaccinated against rabies.

**Chlamydia:** causes conjunctivitis and mild cat flu-type signs. Normally it is only a problem in breeding catteries.

*There is no vaccine available for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (Feline AIDS).*

### The Need for Annual Vaccinations

Recent studies have shown that the vaccine for Panleucopaenia can last for several years, but cat flu and FeLV vaccines start to wane at the end of a year. To reduce costs and for convenience, vaccine manufacturers include all 3 vaccines in a single syringe for annual use and this has not been shown to be harmful.

Sadly no vaccine can give 100% protection against disease due to the nature of the disease itself. For instance, signs of cat flu can be produced by infection with several different viruses and bacteria, but it is only possible to immunise against the three commonest causes. New strains of viruses can appear, against which the vaccines can't give full protection. However the infection will generally be much less severe than in a completely unvaccinated cat.

### Possible Side-effects

Millions of cats are vaccinated every year. Only a tiny proportion will develop a side-effect to vaccination, but if they do, they will generally feel a bit off colour may be off their food for a day or two (anyone who has had a vaccination recently will know the feeling). If a cat is poorly for more than 36-48 hours after a vaccination it is best to get them checked by the vet. Occasionally they can develop a localized swelling at the site of vaccination which should resolve after a couple of weeks. If any swelling remains after this time, please make an appointment to have it checked by the Vet.

As with any drug or vaccination it is possible to develop an immediate allergic reaction, although this is extremely uncommon. The cat will tend to develop swelling of the face, feet or ears, normally vomit and become very quiet within a few minutes of the injection. If this happens veterinary treatment is required immediately.

Vaccine site fibrosarcoma is a type of tumour that can develop at the site of vaccination on the neck, probably as a long term reaction to the adjuvant (a substance added to the vaccine to make it more effective) in the vaccine. This has been a problem in the USA where they use different vaccines, but is fortunately extremely rare in the UK.

So far we have not seen any of these with the cat vaccines we currently use.



# Neutering and Dental Care

## Neutering Your Cat

Spaying or castrating (neutering) your cat is a sensible idea for several reasons, not least to prevent unwanted kittens, but also to stop your young female from contracting FIV, the equivalent to human HIV.

### Female Cats

Female cats will first come into season and be able to have kittens from around 6 months of age. The feline season is known as 'calling', with very good reason as the cat will roll around on the floor with her bottom in the air, crying as though in pain. This will last for 3-5 days every 2-3 weeks throughout the breeding season, which is from early spring to late summer. You are also likely to have any male cats from the neighbourhood visit you at this time, often in the middle of the night.

### Male Cats

An 'entire' tom cat will tend to roam around the neighbourhood or further afield and spray urine in the house to mark his territory. He is more likely to fight with other cats and therefore be more at risk of catching or passing on several feline diseases.

*Neutering your cat will prevent this undesirable behaviour and is best done at 5½ to 6 months old, before the onset of puberty. The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic.*

Castrating a male cat involves removing the testicles from the scrotum.

Spaying a female involves removing the ovaries and the uterus, leaving a small skin wound, usually on the left flank or underside, from which sutures may need to be removed about 10 days later. Your cat will be back to normal within a day or so.

## Make an appointment at reception.

The receptionist will ask you to feed your cat before 8pm the evening before the operation, so it is important to keep your cat in, in case they go out and find something to eat. If they have a full stomach when we operate, it increases the risk of them vomiting under anaesthetic.

Your appointment time for bringing in your cat will be between 8am and 9am and a Nurse will talk through the consent form with you, which you will be required to sign.

Your cat will be taken down to theatre where a pre-med will be administered and they will be bedded down in a comfortable kennel ready for the operation.

Once the operation is completed they will be nursed until they are fully awake and then left to sleep quietly in a comfortable kennel until they are discharged.

We will generally ask you to bring your cats back 3 days after their operation to check on them. Any external stitches will need to be removed 10 days after the operation, although we try where possible to use subcutaneous stitching in cats. This means the stitching is just under the skin and dissolves slowly.

*These checks will be with a qualified Nurse and are free.*



## Preventative Dental Care for Your Cat

Keeping your pet's teeth clean is important for his/her health. It is a good idea to consider how you will manage your pet's oral hygiene well before their adult teeth come through.

### Health Problems Associated with Dental Disease

**PAIN** – animals do not exhibit pain in the same way as people, behaviour changes can be very subtle. By the time they stop eating the dental disease is often very severe and will have been preceded by months of increasing discomfort.

**ORGAN DAMAGE** – studies have shown that severe dental disease can lead to heart, liver, kidney and respiratory problems.

**TOOTH LOSS** – if tartar is allowed to build up it will result in the need for a scale and polish under general anaesthetic or if left untreated ultimately receding gums, this will expose the tooth root and require dental extraction under a general anaesthetic.

**BONE DESTRUCTION** – advanced dental disease can result in bone destruction.

There is a communication between the mouth and nose, which can lead to further complications such as; spontaneous fractures of the jaw and severe pain.

***Once plaque has changed into tartar, the preventative methods below will not be able to remove the build up and often the only option is a scale and polish which requires a general anaesthetic.***

### Recommended Options for Preventative Dental Care in Cats (from 1 year of age)

#### Dental diets

This is the easiest option for cats!

There are special diets (Hill's t/d) available in a complete biscuit form that are proven to mechanically remove plaque from teeth (effectively like brushing), unlike normal dry food which has little effect on plaque.

These diets are very effective as long as your cat chews his/her food and only for adult cats, so when your cat is swapping from kitten to adult food this is an ideal diet to choose.

#### Tooth Brushing

This is an option, but not many cats will tolerate daily brushing!

You will need a (soft) toothbrush and a toothpaste formulated for pets (human toothpastes have a high fluoride content which can be toxic to cats and dogs). Pet's toothpaste also tastes nice to them (chicken or fish flavour) which will hopefully help to make brushing a more positive experience. Getting your pet used to being handled and touched around the mouth is a good first step. Always reward them afterwards with praise, a treat, or their dinner!

Start the process gradually, getting your pet used to you touching its gums, working up to brushing one tooth a day. Move up to a couple of teeth per day and soon you will be doing one side per day. Eventually you should be able to brush the whole mouth, although there is no need to brush the inside of the teeth. The technique is really the same as for humans; a circular movement around the area where the tooth meets the gum. You need to brush daily to be effective.

If some bleeding occurs, try to persist as this should stop once the plaque levels are reduced. If it doesn't, please come in for a check with one of our nurses.

(Taken in part from the British Dental Association website)



## Consultations at Clockhouse Veterinary Hospital

At Clockhouse Veterinary Hospital we are well aware of the behavioural needs of our patients and the impact that pet behavioural problems can have on our clients and their families. For this reason we include preventative behavioural advice and consultations for existing problems as part of our holistic approach to providing total health care for your pet.

### Preventative Behavioural Advice

The best start in life for kittens is essential to prevent the development of undesirable or inappropriate behaviour. At Clockhouse we have developed a programme designed to provide your new pet with the best start possible:

#### Pre-Purchase Advice

We help owners choose the most appropriate breed, gender or even species to acquire and can also give advice on finding reliable breeders, what to look for when viewing the litter and introducing a new pet to other animals in the household.

#### Pet Care

We encourage owners to come for informal chats about aspects of pet care, by appointment with a Practice Nurse or Veterinary Surgeon, to seek help early if things start going wrong.

#### First Visits

A kitten's first visit to the practice can influence all future interactions between our staff and your pet. We try to make it a pleasant and relaxed experience for client and pet.

***If you are experiencing a pet behaviour problem and would like to discuss it, please call Clockhouse Veterinary Hospital on 01453 752555 and ask to speak to Claire Coles-Jones or Mandy Brown.***

### Litter Training your Kitten

Most kittens learn very quickly to use a litter tray. They have a natural instinct to cover up their toilet so will automatically look for something they can dig up.

Place A COUPLE of trays in quiet corners of the house. Cats like a litter tray for each motion, so the more trays you have the better! When the kitten looks ready to use it (they squat down with their tail raised) pick them up and place them in one of the litter trays.

**Telling them off for doing it in the wrong place will just confuse them and the next time they go they'll just make sure it's somewhere out of your sight!**

You can get covered or open trays. Some cats prefer the privacy of a covered tray particularly if there is nowhere quiet to put the tray. These also stop litter and faeces going over the side of the tray and top of the range ones have filters in the lid to help reduce any bad smells. Other cats prefer to be able to see around them whilst using the tray. Start off with one type of tray and change if necessary.

There is a wide range of cat litter available: fuller's earth or clumping clay are more suitable. Do not get scented litters - they may be great for our nose but your cat will hate them! Cats' origins are in the desert, so they may prefer sandy type litters and certainly would prefer not to use sawdust pellets or recycled paper (even though we may prefer this!). Catsan Clumping (NOT Catsan Hygiene) is ideal.

## Socialising your kitten

When you get a new kitten it is important for them to interact with all the different people and animals that they're likely to come across in their life.

Obviously for the first few days you don't want to swamp them and it is important to give them time to themselves and an area where they can get away from everything (especially small children and playful dogs).

Try to make any introductions as enjoyable and playful as possible, giving them plenty of positive encouragement and using toys and objects they're familiar with as re-assurance.

Whilst being held most cats are happier if they're stroked at the same time, so start by restraining them gently with one hand and stroking them with the other.

Talking quietly to them in a reassuring tone helps as well. If they start to struggle it's best to let them go and try again later when they are more relaxed.

Try to introduce your kitten to as many people as possible, although don't force things if they become nervous or stressed.

Some cats prefer to bond through regular playing with toys. This can work just as well as handling, although they may never be a cuddly cat. Frequent sessions of play with everyone one in the house will quickly integrate your kitten into the family.

## Play and Toys

Cats are born hunters, spending up to six hours a day in the wild stalking prey. In the domestic situation play becomes a vital outlet for all that natural instinct, as well as being a great way to form a strong relationship with your pet.

It can also be the only way to give a fat or lazy cat exercise. Try to set aside plenty of time for games, especially if you have an indoor cat.

Indoor cats need more to stimulate them, as their natural instinct is curbed by not going outside to hunt and patrol their perimeters.

There are huge numbers of toys for cats in the pet shops, some of which your cat will love, while some will be a complete waste of money.

Feathery or furry toys on string, elastic or on fishing rods can be great fun. Catnip mice are often a success. Some cats love chasing the light from a pen torch or laser pointer around the carpet. Home-made toys such as balls of aluminum foil can be great fun, or even a paper bag with some kibbles in.

However, be very careful with elastic bands, string, cotton, pins and needles. A lot of cats love chasing, chewing and often swallowing them, which can result in severe intestinal problems.



## Meeting other pets

### Dogs

Control the first few meetings by having the dog on a lead. Try not to make a fuss of either of them so they can sort out between themselves who is boss. When there is no sign of fear or aggression it should be fine to leave them together. Always leave a means of escape for the cat, where he can be safe and watch the dog from a distance.

***DO NOT 'FORCE' A MEETING – this will cause a lot of stress for your kitten.***

### Rabbits and Guinea Pigs

It is best to always supervise kittens with rodents. Although they can get on very well, they can easily scratch or distress each other, even when playing.

### Other Cats

Initially it is best to let the two cats smell each other while not actually being able to see each other, so while keeping them in different rooms swap over their bedding. Pheromone transfer can also be done by rubbing clean cloths over each of the cats and smoothing these over the opposite cat. After a few days let them see each other through a partition (a puppy training crate works well). Once any signs of aggression seem to have stopped you can risk letting them out in the same area, but ensure they have safe areas they can escape to. It may take a long time for them to get along and it is important to keep things as normal as possible, not changing any of your original routines while things are settling down.

It is important to increase litter trays (preferably 2 trays per cat) and increase feeding stations in different areas around the home. Many cats do not like being on the floor when eating.

Do not put a feeding station near the cat flap or outside door. This can encourage other cats into your house for a free meal, which will be very stressful for your cat.

***Never put litter trays near food, or near the cat flap/door to outside. This can cause cats to defecate elsewhere.***

If your cats ever start to spray, or urinate and defecate around the house, do not dismiss this as your cat 'being naughty'. Cats only ever do this around the house for two reasons: a behavioral problem or a physical problem (and often both go together). It is our job to help decide what the problem is and treat it accordingly.

***Never punish a cat for spraying, urinating or defecating in the house.***

If you have any further questions about this, please ask us for help.

