



2nd Kitten Care Handout

Spaying and Neutering: We recommend spaying and neutering all cats at around 6 months of age. Spaying before the cat's first heat almost completely eliminates the chance that later in life she will develop mammary cancer. Neutering your male cat also eliminates the chance of testicular cancer as well as decreasing the likelihood of behavior problems such as roaming, spraying, and fighting.

Microchipping: A microchip can be implanted under the skin over the shoulder blades of both dogs and cats. It acts as a permanent form of identification should your pet get lost or taken. Most veterinarians, pounds and shelters have scanners to be able to read the chips. They would then call the number of the company that makes the chip and find out to whom the pet belongs. The needle used for implantation is fairly good sized, so if possible, we prefer to implant the microchip while the pet is under anesthesia during a spay/neuter. It may be implanted without anesthesia if you are not planning on fixing your cat.

Collars and ID tags: Even if your cat is microchipped, having it wear a physical collar with identification on it can be beneficial in getting your cat returned to you. Some collars you may have printed with your contact information. If not, most pet stores have machines you can use to make an identification tag.

Dental Care: It is important to maintain healthy teeth as this promotes full body health. We recommend brushing your kitten's teeth, once daily, to keep his/her mouth healthy and prolong the time in between dental cleanings. Please see our handout on "How to brush your pet's teeth" for more information on how to get started. If brushing your kitten's teeth is not an option for you, please talk with your veterinarian about dental treats and rinses for cats.

Pet Insurance: Pet insurance comes in handy if you have unexpected/emergency veterinary bills. Most plans will also cover routine vaccination, spaying, neutering, and dental cleanings, although you should check with the insurance company to be sure. There are many insurance policies available and most veterinary practices including specialists will take them. Make sure the company you chose has a good reputation and experience.

Grooming: It is helpful to develop a regular grooming routine with your kitten. It helps him/her get used to being touched all over and prevents long haired cats from developing mats. Use a wire brush to gently stroke your cat's fur in the direction it grows. If you start brushing early and often, your cat will enjoy it and it will make it more fun for both of you in the long run.

If you notice that your cat's ears are dirty, you may clean the very outer section with a Q-tip, being sure not to insert it into the ear canal. If your cat is scratching at its ears, there is an odor to the discharge, or there is a lot of discharge, please bring him/her in to be examined by a veterinarian for an ear infection.

Toys and Exercise: Providing toys and regular exercise periods for your kitten help to prevent obesity, enrich your pet's environment, and decrease the likelihood of behavior problems due to boredom. Consider laser light toys, cat nip toys, and feather toys. Just remember not to leave a cat unattended with a toy with a long string as some cats will consume the string and it will become stuck in the intestine. Try to play with your cat 15 minutes a day. This beneficial exercise will also be a source of bonding time for you and your cat.

Behavior Topics: Please talk with your veterinarian if you are experiencing any behavior issues such as going outside the litter box, biting, scratching, eating of non-food items, destructive tendencies, etc. The earlier these issues are addressed the more easily these behaviors may be changed.