



# New Kitten Information Packet

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a fun and rewarding journey of raising a kitten! Whether you are experienced with cats or a first-time cat owner, this packet will supply you with the most current information and advice about how to raise your new friend. If you have any questions during or after your visit, please feel free to ask one of our doctors or staff members. We are always here to help!



## Vaccines

Vaccines are a key part of your cat's preventative care plan, and are essential in preventing potentially fatal diseases, especially in kittens. At Sangaree Animal Hospital, we use the most recent research and AAHA guidelines to individually tailor your cat's vaccination schedule according to his or her health status, lifestyle, and risk of exposure.

### Core Vaccines

**What are Core Vaccines?** Core vaccines protect against diseases so devastating and so common that we believe every cat should receive protection. If not vaccinated, these diseases may cause major illness, if not death, in infected cats. Core vaccines are strongly recommended for your feline friend.

**What does the FVRCP Vaccine protect against?** The FVRCP Vaccine protects against Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR), Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia. Panleukopenia is a highly contagious virus that causes severe diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration, and low white blood cell count. It is basically the feline version of parvovirus in puppies! Since there is no cure for the disease, treatment involves supportive care & does not guarantee survival. Due to the seriousness of this disease and rates of contagion, it is included in the "Core Vaccines" that are necessary for all cats.

**Are Calicivirus and Rhinotracheitis contagious?** Yes, both are upper respiratory infections and are extremely contagious to other cats.

**When to get core vaccinations?** Typically, vaccination starts at 8 weeks of age and continues every 3-4 weeks for a series of 3 injections, followed by a booster one year later. Adults with previous vaccination need revaccination every 3 years.

### Non-Core Vaccines

**Non-Core Vaccines are recommended on a case-by-case basis.** We do strongly recommend the FeLV vaccine as a non-core vaccine.

**What is FeLV? (Feline Leukemia Virus)** Cats who are exposed to cats with unknown disease and vaccine status are more at risk for contracting feline leukemia. The disease can occur by itself, or in combination with the feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), a deadly AIDS-like virus. FeLV is transmitted through nasal secretions and saliva or bite wounds from infected cats and has no cure. Infected queens can transmit the disease to their offspring through the placenta prior to birth or through the milk during lactation. As a result, even newborn kittens can test positive for this disease. For other cats, close contact is required for effective transmission.

**Why Consider the FeLV Vaccine?** Due to the virus's method of transmission, testing for feline leukemia prior to vaccinating is recommended. The vaccine is generally only given to cats leading an indoor/outdoor lifestyle, former stray cats that have recently been introduced into the home, or cats that are prone to escaping. Once given, yearly booster vaccines are needed to keep immunity at proper level.

**RABIES:** By South Carolina law, the rabies vaccine must be given to cats after 16 weeks of age, since rabies can be transmitted to humans. A booster is given one year later. If an unvaccinated pet bites or is bitten, serious consequences may occur including quarantine of your pet at your expense up to 6 months and/or euthanasia. Don't take that risk. Keep your cat vaccinated.



# Prevent Accidental Poisons

Have you taken inventory of your medicine cabinets lately? Are you properly storing lawn and garden pesticide containers? When you tidy up around the house, do you put food, liquor, and tobacco products safely out of harm's way? These precautions are second nature to households with children, but homes with animals must be just as secure.

## #1: MEDICATIONS FOR PEOPLE

Pets have a much greater sensitivity to many of the common over-the-counter and prescription medications that may be in your home.

Some of the medications that often poison cats include:

**Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications**, such as ibuprofen or naproxen. The most common cause of pet poisoning, these painkillers can cause ulcers in the stomach and intestines, and kidney damage.

**Acetaminophen (Tylenol)** is particularly toxic to cats, resulting in red blood cell damage. Just two extra-strength tablets may prove fatal to felines.

**Antidepressants** may cause vomiting and, in more serious instances, serotonin syndrome - a dangerous condition that raises temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure, and may cause seizures.

**Methylphenidate**, an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drug, is a stimulant for pets, raising heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature.

## #2: HOUSE PLANTS

Cats are notorious for noshing on house plants, and the habit isn't just bad for your potted treasures. Many common, beautiful house plants contain cat poisons that can cause serious harm, and even death. Some of the plants toxic to cats include:

**Lilies:** Ingesting even small amounts of Easter lilies and related plants can cause severe kidney failure in cats.

**Azaleas and Rhododendrons:** These pretty flowering plants contain toxins that may result in vomiting, diarrhea, coma, and sometimes even death.

**Tulips and Daffodils:** The bulbs of these plants, if ingested, may cause serious stomach problems, convulsions, and damage to the heart.

**Sago Plants:** Eating just a few seeds may be enough to cause vomiting, seizures, and liver failure.

## #3: INSECTICIDES

Products for your lawn and garden may be poisonous to animals that ingest them, perhaps by grooming themselves after walking or laying in a recently treated area. Make sure to check all labels and, when in doubt, keep your pet away.

## #4: HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS

Just as cleaners like bleach can poison people, they are also a leading cause of pet poisoning, resulting in stomach and respiratory tract problems. Other common household products dangerous to cats include laundry detergent, kitchen and bath surface cleaners, carpet cleaners, and toilet bowl cleaners.

## #5: GLOW STICKS AND JEWELRY

You went to a concert or a fireworks display and brought home a glow stick or glow necklace. Cats are attracted to them, but they contain a very bitter tasting liquid called dibutyl phthalate. While rarely deadly, just one bite into glow sticks can cause your cat to drool profusely.

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### OTHER COMMON SOURCES OF POISON TO CATS INCLUDE:

**Foods:** sugar-free gum, chocolate, onions, garlic, chives

**Plants:** Any plant in the lily family, boxwood, aloe, iris, cherry tree, mums, geranium, etc.

**Other:** Rodenticides (including the ingestion of rodents that were exposed) other pet medications, heavy metals (think batteries), etc.

For a complete list, visit [ASPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control](https://www.aspcapetcare.com/pet-care/animal-poison-control)



# Spay & Neuter Procedure

The old adage that “if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem” is particularly applicable to unwanted pregnancy in cats – and that includes purebred cats!

## Spay Your Female Cats

Aside from the very real pet overpopulation problem, there are valid health reasons for spaying female cats. Spaying your cat will not change her personality, and there is no benefit to letting a cat “have just one litter.” In fact, this only contributes to overpopulation when those kittens have litters of their own. Additionally, it’s a myth that spaying your cat will cause her to gain weight.

There are numerous benefits to spaying your cat including:

**Eliminates chances of pyometritis.** Pyometra is an infection of the uterus that is fatal if emergency surgery is not performed immediately. This is a life-threatening condition and creates a great financial expense to the owner.

**Decreased risk of mammary cancer.** Ideally, to give a female cat protection against mammary cancer, she should be spayed prior to her first heat. Each subsequent heat brings a greater chance of mammary cancer at a later time.

**Eliminates risk of ovarian or uterine cancer.** Spaying a cat involves the removal of the uterus and ovaries. No organs; no cancer; simple as that.

## Neuter Your Male Cats

This is the most proactive step. Neutering is a relatively simple surgery with a quick recovery period. Besides preventing unwanted pregnancies, neutering a male will help mitigate certain problem behaviors found in unneutered males and, in addition, it will help prevent certain medical conditions. Neutering will not take away your cat’s personality or “manhood.” The only thing he will miss is fighting and running away from home!

### Neutered cats:

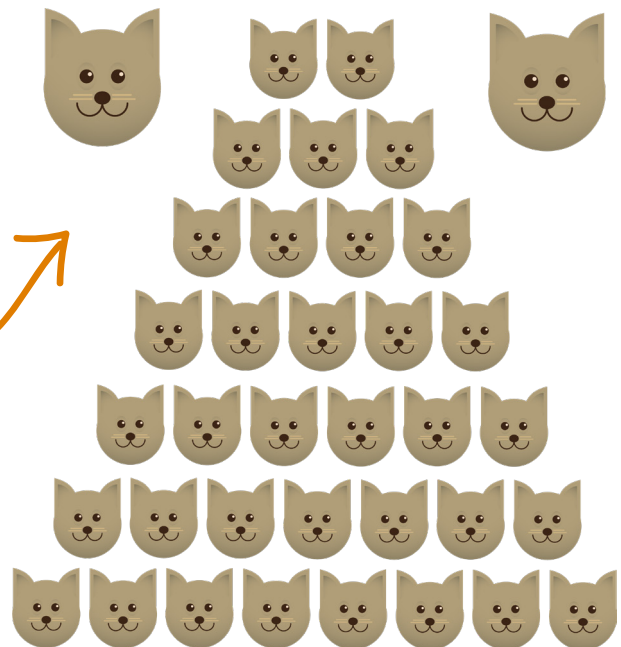
- Are less likely to spray strong urine
- Will lose much of the urge to fight.
- Are less likely to try to escape/run away
- Are less likely to contract diseases such as FeLV and FIV.
- Not subject to testicular cancer
- Not likely to develop “stud tail” caused by overactive glands in the tail.
- Have a decreased risk of mammary cancer.

In short, there are many good reasons to neuter male cats. Your cat will be a much more pleasant companion, and will ultimately be happier and healthier.

### Did You Know?

An unspayed female cat, her mate, and all of their offspring producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter can total:

- 1 YEAR: 12
- 2 YEARS: 67
- 3 YEARS: 376
- 4 YEARS: 2,107
- 5 YEARS: 11,801
- 6 YEARS: 66,088
- 7 YEARS: 370,092
- 8 YEARS: 2,072,514
- 9 YEARS: 11,606,077





## Feeding Your New Kitten

Growing kittens require significantly more food for their size than adult cats. The feeding guidelines listed on your pet food bag are a good place to start, but you should monitor how well those amounts seem to be meeting your kitten's needs.



**Be sure to split the total daily allotment into smaller meals.** As a general rule, most kittens under 4 months old should be fed at least 3x per day. Kittens 4-12 months old should be fed at least 2x per day. Adult cats can be fed 1-2x per day depending on owner preference.



**When eliminating a feeding time:** decrease the amount of food fed at that meal gradually over a 5-7 day period to help ease the transition. Free-choice feeding (having food available all the time) is an alternative, as long as you are careful not to put out more food in a day than your cat should be eating. In addition to controlling the amount of cat food fed, limiting calorie intake from treats and encouraging an adequate exercise program are also important in maintaining ideal weight and body condition.



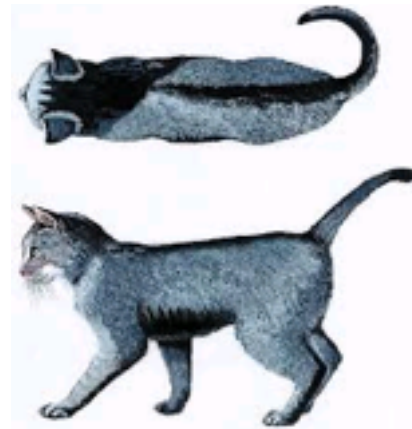
**In general, it is not a good idea to feed your cat "people food".** Humans and cats have different nutritional and energy requirements, making it difficult to provide a balanced diet that incorporates a large portion of "people food". Even using human food for treats is not a good idea. Once a kitten learns to expect handouts, begging and occasional food snatching becomes a problem. Also, human foods are often high calorie treats, which can contribute to obesity.



**For optimal health, it's best for all cats (kittens and adults) to be a little on the lean side.** That doesn't mean your pet should be abnormally skinny. It means you should be able to feel (but not see) ribs when you run your hands down your pet's sides. Your kitten should also have a definite "waist" when viewed from above. If you have any concerns about your kitten's growth rate, condition, or eating habits, we encourage you to schedule a weight check.

### Healthy Kitten Weight Guide

- ✓ Ribs cannot be seen
- ✓ Ribs can be felt
- ✓ Kitten has a waist
- ✓ Kitten has a tuck



## Microchipping

Even the most experienced and diligent pet owner is at risk for losing their cat. While collars and tags are important and certainly beneficial when worn by your pet, they are subject to breaking, fading, becoming scratched, and even falling off. If this occurs, there is no way to determine to whom your pet belongs. Microchipping is a permanent means of identification, and the best possible way of bringing your lost or stolen best friend back to you.

A microchip is a rice-grain sized electronic chip enclosed in a glass case that is injected under the skin of your cat using a hypodermic needle. If your cat is ever lost and brought to a veterinary hospital or shelter, one of the first procedures performed is to scan for a microchip. Though no one wants to suffer the heartbreak of losing a pet, microchipping helps to create a happy reunion.



## Insurance

Pet insurance is becoming more popular in the United States. In European countries, it is already well established. Pet insurance can help with unexpected costs associated with illness or accident.

If interested in insurance, it is best to go ahead and start when your cat is young. There are quite a few insurance companies. We have attached a chart comparing some of the more popular companies: ASPCA, Embrace, Figo, Nationwide, Petplan, Pets Best, Trupanion.

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## Dental Care

We clean our teeth twice a day (imagine what our mouths would be like if we didn't), and cats are no exception. It's important to develop a dental care regime at an early age to get your kitten used to it.

The gold standard of care is daily brushing with pet-safe toothpaste. If you're not sure you'll be able to keep up with this, we recommend using other dental products to help clean the teeth. Unfortunately, all dental treats are not created equally. Certain products are much more effective than others, which is why it is important to ask your veterinarian what will be best for your kitten.

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## Parasite Prevention

### FLEA & TICK PREVENTION

Fortunately, today we have very effective flea and tick preventatives that have a wide margin of safety and are easy to administer. **According to your cat's lifestyle, we recommend the use of monthly oral preventatives such as Revolution.**

Flea collars, (with the exception of Seresto collars) sprays, baths and flea-bombs are generally ineffective and employ harsh chemicals that are irritating and even toxic to your cat. Never administer flea/tick products labeled for dogs, as these products are usually toxic to cats!

### INTESTINAL PARASITE PREVENTION

Many kittens are born with intestinal parasites from an infected mother (in-utero), via milk, or feces ingestion. The only way to diagnose intestinal parasites is by microscopic examination of your kitten's feces for the eggs shed by the adult worms.

In very large infestations, some adult worms can be observed in your kitten's bowel movements, or after he or she vomits. Dewormers can be given orally but we first need to diagnose which parasites your kitten has. We recommend bringing a fresh fecal sample for analysis of parasites during your kitten's first visit with us.