



## **Congratulations on your new kitten!**

Whether you are a new cat owner or experienced cat owner, congratulations on your new companion. Everyone at *Little Seneca Animal Hospital* wants to meet your new kitten to welcome him or her into our family. We promise that we will be here to support and provide you with all of the kitten care, guidance, and information you will need to ensure that your new kitten grows up strong, healthy and happy.

It is important to your new kitten's long term health that we examine your kitten as soon as possible to identify any potential health issues early on. We will answer your questions on caring for your kitten long-term, including food and nutrition questions, vaccinations, other health topics and behavioral issues. It is important to note that while most cat owners believe that indoor cats do not need any preventatives, this misconception is just untrue. It is important for your cat to have annual exams and stay current on all vaccinations and preventatives.



## Your Kitten's First Wellness Exam

The first step in keeping your kitten healthy is visiting us for a kitten wellness exam. This initial visit includes a thorough physical exam, which allows us the opportunity to establish a relationship with you and your kitten as well as to fully understand your expectations as pet owner. We will also spend time with you answering all of your questions about kitten care. Your kitten's exam will also include:

- 🐾 Flea/tick control. We will discuss the best product for your kitten's lifestyle
- 🐾 Heartworm preventative as needed
- 🐾 Fecal examination for intestinal parasites and appropriate deworming
- 🐾 Establishing a vaccine schedule for your puppy's breed and anticipated lifestyle
- 🐾 Necessary vaccines or vaccine boosters

When visiting with your new kitten, please bring:

- 🐾 Your kitten in a pet carrier
- 🐾 Any prior health information provided to you by the breeder, shelter or previous owner provided you such as a history of vaccines or worming
- 🐾 A fresh stool sample
- 🐾 All vaccination and health records you may have

### Vaccination/Wellness Schedule

Wellness Visit 1 8-10 weeks of age	Wellness Visit 2 11-13 weeks of age	Wellness Visit 3 14-16 weeks of age
Wellness Exam	Wellness Exam	Wellness Exam
Fvrpc # 1	Fvrpc # 2	Fvrpc # 3
FELV/FIV Test	FELV #1	FELV # 2
Fecal Flotation		Rabies
Dewormer		
Heartworm Prevention		
Flea/Tick Prevention		

(The final step of spaying/neutering your kitten should take place at 6 months of age.)

After your kitten's third round of vaccinations, he/she will be up to date for one year. You will need to continue heartworm prevention and flea/tick prevention once monthly for the extent of your cat's life.

Most kittens contract intestinal parasites from their mothers, therefore, a dewormer will be recommended for your kitten regardless if we find parasites on their first visit or not; the first round is to be given the day of the first appointment, then the second round two weeks later. **If intestinal parasites are found**, a different course of dewormer will be recommended. Instructions will be provided.

# Why Vaccinate?

Vaccinations have become commonplace for cats today, as they can effectively prevent potentially serious feline diseases like distemper, rabies and hepatitis. Not only can regular vaccinations protect your pet's health, they can also keep the human members of your family healthy as well; some feline illnesses can be transferred to humans. Below are the vaccines we offer and recommend at Little Seneca Animal Hospital.

**FVRCP:** Commonly called the feline distemper vaccine, this is the most common combination vaccine given to cats. The initials FVRCP refer to the diseases included in the vaccine.

🐾 **Feline Viral Rhinotracheiti :**

- Severe upper respiratory infection caused by a feline herpes virus
- Young, unvaccinated kittens tend to be more susceptible to the disease
- Spread through the air and by direct or indirect (i.e. utensils, bedding) contact with an infected animal
- Major symptoms include discharge from the nose and eyes, sneezing and coughing, and can also include a high fever

🐾 **Calicivirus**

- There are different strains of calici causing a range of illnesses from mild to severe
- Causes respiratory infection in cats and is transmitted through direct contact with infected animals

🐾 **Panleukopenia:**

- Highly contagious diseases that is most severe in young kittens
- Causes severe gastrointestinal symptoms such as loss of appetite, followed by vomiting and diarrhea

**Feline Leukemia:** (FELV Test/Vaccine) Feline leukemia is a retrovirus that is the #1 killer of cats in the US. Felv can be transmitted between infected cats when the transfer of saliva or nasal secretions is involved. If not defeated by the animal's immune system, the virus can be lethal. The disease caused by this virus is a form of cancer of the blood cells called lymphocytes. We highly recommend this vaccine to cats/kittens that are or will be outdoors at all.

**FIV:** (Virus that causes Feline Aids) It is spread to other cats through saliva, urine, feces, and sexual activity. Transmitted easily during cat fights, therefore outdoor cats are at a higher risk. This is not transmittable to humans. We do not recommend vaccinating against this virus due to inconsistent studies.

We encourage you to have your kitten/ cat tested for FELV/FIV. New kittens should test at 8 weeks of age and re-tested 6 months later to ensure positive/negative results. If you are planning on keeping your cat outdoors or have an outdoor cat we highly recommend you having your cat tested annually. Please note; if you plan on bringing a new feline into the home with other cats make sure they have been tested before bringing inside the home and introducing to other animals.

**Rabies:** Rabies is a severe, and often fatal, that specifically affects the gray matter of the cat's brain and its central nervous system. The primary way the rabies virus is transmitted to cats in the United States is through a bite from a disease carrier: foxes, raccoons, skunks, and bats. Infectious virus particles are retained in a rabid animal's salivary glands that spread the virus through their saliva. Symptoms include fever, seizures, paralysis, hydrophobia, jaw is dropped, inability to swallow, change in tone of bark, muscular lack of coordination, unusual shyness or aggression, excessive excitability, constant irritability/changes in attitude and behavior, paralysis in the mandible and larynx, and excessive salivation. **Rabies vaccinations are required by Montgomery County law.**

# Importance of Preventatives

The most common internal parasites of cats live in the gastrointestinal tract. You may see some of these organisms in your pet's feces, but a fecal analysis by your veterinarian is more reliable. Some parasites live in the bloodstream or other parts of the body. Blood tests may be required to detect these. Most internal parasites can be treated with medication available here at Little Seneca Animal Hospital.

## Heartworm

- 🐾 Heartworms are worms that look very similar to roundworms, but live in the heart. Their microscopic larvae circulate in the blood and are spread by mosquitoes.
- 🐾 Heartworm disease is not just a canine disease! Heartworms affect cats differently than dogs, but the disease they cause is equally serious.
- 🐾 Heartworm larvae induce an intense inflammatory response in the blood vessels and the tissues in the lungs.
- 🐾 It only takes one mosquito to infect a cat, and because mosquitoes can get indoors, both indoor and outdoor cats are at risk and should receive heartworm preventative. In a recent study, 28% of the cats diagnosed with heartworm were inside only cats.
- 🐾 The name "heartworm disease" is a misnomer, as it mostly affects the lungs, not just the heart. Signs are often mistaken for feline asthma, allergic bronchitis or other respiratory diseases.
- 🐾 We strongly recommend that your pet be given Revolution or Heartgard monthly for the entirety of their lives.

The preventative we most recommend for heartworms in cats is Revolution. Ask your technician for more details.

## Flea/Tick Diseases

- 🐾 Ticks transmit a large number of diseases in North America. These diseases include Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, relapsing fever, ehrlichiosis, tularemia, and tick paralysis. It is important for the health of your pet, as well as the safety of your family, to include ticks in your pet's year-round parasite control program.
- 🐾 Fleas can carry and transmit several potential illnesses of importance to humans, including typhus and plague, and can transmit "cat scratch disease" (infection with Bartonella) among cats that can then spread the disease to humans. Additionally, fleas serve as an intermediate host for tapeworms, which can infect your pet and occasionally humans.
- 🐾 We have several monthly flea/tick preventatives available at Little Seneca Animal Hospital. Please ask your technician which preventative is best for your pet.

## Importance of Parasite Testing

Each year for your pet's annual examination, we will ask you to provide a fresh stool sample- preferably, from the same day. By analyzing the sample under a microscope, we are able to look for eggs or cysts of intestinal parasites that live in your pet's digestive system. Many of the internal parasites we see in dogs and cats are zoonotic, meaning people can become infected too. We want both you and your pet to be parasite free!

- 🐾 Almost all kittens acquire **roundworms** from their mothers. The worms look like curly pieces of spaghetti and may be several inches long. Heavy infestation with roundworms may cause a dull hair coat and pot-bellied appearance. Roundworms can also cause disease in children, so all kittens should be routinely tested and treated. The treatment is a simple oral medication, but it must be repeated two or more times.
- 🐾 **Tapeworms** are one type of worm you may very likely see in your pets stool. The worms are long and flat (like a narrow piece of tape), but you will rarely see the entire worm. Small segments, resembling grains of rice or sesame seeds, break off periodically and appear in the feces or on the hair around your pet's anus. Tapeworms are spread when your pet swallows an infected flea while grooming himself, or when he eats an infected animal, such as a mouse. Tapeworms may cause anal irritation, and some types can cause problems in children. You can prevent your pet from being exposed to tapeworms by controlling fleas and discouraging hunting. Your cat can be treated for tapeworms with an oral or injectable medication.
- 🐾 **Hookworms** look similar to roundworms, but are smaller. Hookworms live in the small intestine where they feed on blood. They can cause severe anemia and even death in kittens. Hookworm larvae live in the soil, especially in warm, humid areas. They can cause skin infections in humans. Hookworms can be treated with an oral medication.
- 🐾 **Whipworms** get their name because part of the worm is short and thick, like the handle of a whip, while the rest is long and slender, like the lash. Whipworms can cause diarrhea and colitis. Treatment and prevention are similar to that for roundworms and hookworms.
- 🐾 **Protozoan** parasites of the intestine include Giardia and Coccidia. All are microscopic. Giardia and Coccidia often cause diarrhea in puppies. Giardia can be spread to humans as well. Oral medications are available to treat for these organisms.

## Importance of Spaying/Neutering

At Little Seneca Animal Hospital, we recommend spaying/neutering your cat at **6 months of age** to prevent complications later in life. This is the final, very important step of preventative care for your kitten.

**Spay Benefits** Unspayed female cats go through several heat periods each year. During her heat period, your female cat will urinate more frequently or may even spray urine on vertical objects ("marking") when they are in heat. She will also make every effort to sneak out to find a mate. As a result, she is at high risk for being hit by a car. Spaying eliminates these heat cycles.

Unspayed female cats suffer from a **high incidence of mammary tumors, uterine infections, and reproductive cancers**. Breast tumors are very common in cats. Unspayed cats can also develop pyometra, a life-threatening infection of the uterus. **Spaying removes the possibility of diseases of the ovaries and uterus, and comes close to eliminating the chance of mammary tumors.**

**Neuter Benefits** The normal behavior of an un-neutered cat is often incompatible with being a household pet. Intact cats tend to wander from home, seeking a mate or defending their territory. This puts them at risk for being hit by a car or being injured in a cat fight. **Urine marking and some types of aggression are more pronounced in un-neutered cats as well. Intact males cats will continually "spray" inside your home. Training does not correct this behavior.**

The final benefit of spaying/neutering is that it is the best way you can help end pet overpopulation. Every year, 3-4 million cats and dogs are euthanized in U.S. animal shelters. None of us wants to contribute to that sad statistic, but we may do so unwittingly. Kittens adopted to apparently good homes may be given away or lost. Even purebred cats end up homeless.

Although each of these procedures is very routine, they carry the risks normally associated with general anesthesia and surgery. We take numerous measures to keep your cat safe, such as checking her heart and lungs before administering anesthesia and monitoring her constantly while she is asleep. We also take additional safety precautions, such as pre-anesthetic blood tests and administration of IV fluids during the procedure.

# Nutrition Information

## Kittens

A kitten requires a great deal of nutrition to get through its first year healthy and happy. In order to get the correct nutrients for growth it is important to feed a diet specifically for kittens until they have stopped growing.

As a kitten becomes an adult cat, the nutritional and energy needs of the cat change. As a responsible pet owner, we will want to shift to a diet to meet the nutritional requirements of the adult cat. These high quality diets contain carefully balanced ingredients that are vital for preventing disease. Feeding the right diet at the right life stage can have a significant impact on increasing the life span of our pets.

The amount of food needed changes rapidly during a kitten's first year. Most kittens should be fed 3 times a day until they are 6-8 weeks of age. After this age, most cats are fed one to two times daily. The quantity of food can be determined by reading the suggested feeding volumes listed on the food bag. Regularly scheduled meal times are optimal as opposed to free feeding throughout the day. **Free feeding often leads to obesity.**

## Obesity

While gaining a few pounds may not make a lot of difference to your body, for a cat or dog with a comparatively smaller body, a few pounds can add a lot of stress to bones and organs.

**Obesity can adversely affect your pet's health** by causing lameness and arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, exercise intolerance and overheating, increase anesthetic and surgical risks, and most seriously, **a reduced life span.**

Some causes of obesity are genetics, high-fat diets, over-feeding, lack of exercise, and health problems such as hypothyroidism

### How do I know if my pet is overweight?

You can use the "Purina Body Condition Score System" to determine if your pet is overweight. Your pet should have an hour glass shape with minimal fat covering ribs and abdominal tuck evident.

### How do I keep my pet at a healthy weight?

- 🐾 Routine visits to your veterinarian- this will help monitor your pet's weight and other health conditions.
- 🐾 Ask your veterinarian to recommend a nutrition plan that will help your pet reach its ideal body condition. An effective diet should also include the right balance of protein, fat and fiber to promote healthy weight loss.
- 🐾 Measure each serving- feed your pet twice a day. Follow the recommended feeding amount given to you by your veterinarian.
- 🐾 Limit treats and avoid people food.
- 🐾 Exercise your pet as much as possible! Have more playtimes with your cat; take your dog on daily walks.



**Nestlé PURINA**

# BODY CONDITION SYSTEM

**TOO THIN**

**1** Ribs visible on shorthaired cats; no palpable fat; severe abdominal tuck; lumbar vertebrae and wings of ilia easily palpated.

**2** Ribs easily visible on shorthaired cats; lumbar vertebrae obvious with minimal muscle mass; pronounced abdominal tuck; no palpable fat.

**3** Ribs easily palpable with minimal fat covering; lumbar vertebrae obvious; obvious waist behind ribs; minimal abdominal fat.

**4** Ribs palpable with minimal fat covering; noticeable waist behind ribs; slight abdominal tuck; abdominal fat pad absent.

**IDEAL**

**5** Well-proportioned; observe waist behind ribs; ribs palpable with slight fat covering; abdominal fat pad minimal.

**TOO HEAVY**

**6** Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering; waist and abdominal fat pad distinguishable but not obvious; abdominal tuck absent.

**7** Ribs not easily palpated with moderate fat covering; waist poorly discernible; obvious rounding of abdomen; moderate abdominal fat pad.

**8** Ribs not palpable with excess fat covering; waist absent; obvious rounding of abdomen with prominent abdominal fat pad; fat deposits present over lumbar area.

**9** Ribs not palpable under heavy fat cover; heavy fat deposits over lumbar area, face and limbs; distention of abdomen with no waist; extensive abdominal fat deposits.



Call 1-800-222-VETS (8387), weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT



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## Emergency Clinic Information

Little Seneca Animal Hospital is not open 24 hours a day, therefore we recommend taking your pet to one of the following after hours emergency clinics.



OPEN 24 HOURS  
1 Taft Ct  
Rockville, MD 20850  
301-637-3228  
301-795-0145 (F)  
[info.rockville@bluepearlvet.com](mailto:info.rockville@bluepearlvet.com)



OPEN 24 HOURS  
500 Perry Parkway  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
301-926-3300  
301-977-1308 (f)  
[www.vcaspecialtyvets.com](http://www.vcaspecialtyvets.com)