

CARING FOR YOUR NEW KITTEN

Congratulations! You have a new Kitten.

There are a few areas to consider when looking after your new kitten.

1. INTESTINAL WORMS

Cats can be infected with round, hook, and tapeworms, all of which can cause severe illness to the cat.

THE BEST WORMING SCHEDULE IS:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency of worming</u>
6 – 12 weeks	every two weeks
3 – 6 months	every month
> 6 months	every three months

We recommend that you use an 'allwormer' tablet. Avoid cheap supermarket brands, as these are often ineffective, treating only some worms not all worms. Always weigh your kitten before worming so that you are sure of the correct dose.

2. HEARTWORM

Heartworm is a worm that primarily infects and lives in the hearts of domestic dogs and their relatives e.g.: Foxes and Dingoes etc. These worms are passed on by mosquitoes. Over the last 10 years cats (estimated at 1 to 2% of the feline population) have been found to be infected with heartworm after being bitten by an infected mosquito. This may result in heart and lung disease and often death.

Since there is no effective treatment against heartworm in cats, prevention is important. There are products for heartworm prevention, all of which are administered monthly (topical 'spot-on' liquids which treat for heartworm, intestinal worms and fleas in one dose).

3. VACCINATIONS

Vaccination of all kittens is essential to prevent disease. Four infectious diseases are preventable by vaccinating your new kitten (F3 or F4 vaccinations).

1. Feline infectious rhinotracheitis/herpes virus (“cat flu”)
2. Feline calicivirus (“cat flu”)
3. Feline infectious enteritis
4. Feline leukaemia virus

This standard vaccination program should begin at six weeks of age. To ensure your kitten has complete immunity, booster vaccinations need to be given at:

6 – 8 weeks, 12 – 14 weeks & 16-18 weeks

After which a yearly booster is required for life.

4. GROOMING / SKIN & COAT CARE

Although cats groom themselves, you may like to occasionally wash your kitten to remove dead skin and clean the coat. If so we advise using a soap free shampoo such as ALOVEEN, which will not remove vital coat oils, however will still clean the coat. Cats can be difficult to bathe, so have patience! Use warm water and slowly place the cat in the tub keeping a good hold on its scruff at all times. Do not splash water, and use a small bowl to gently pour water over the cat.

Long-haired cats must be brushed frequently otherwise knots will form, we recommend at least 15 minutes a day to devote to grooming you long-haired cat.

5. NUTRITION

Your kitten will grow rapidly over the next few months, so it is very important to supply him / her with excellent nutrition. The easiest way to give your kitten all that is necessary is to use a complete and balanced diet. We recommend using a complete and balanced premium dry food such as Royal Canin growth food or Hills Science Diet. Dry food has the benefits that it will not “go off” if left out all day, is inexpensive to buy and easier to store than canned food.

RAW CHICKEN WINGS AND NECKS, OR THIN STRIPS OF RAW MEAT OR FISH, are ideal for keeping the gums and teeth clean and healthy. Try to encourage your new kitten to start eating these raw meaty bones at least twice a week. If you do not offer bones now, your cat may refuse to eat them later in life.

Milk is not essential for a balanced diet. If you are to give your cat milk, we advise only using pet milk such as Whiskas cat milk. Pet milks are lactose free and unlikely to cause gastrointestinal upset.

6. FLEAS

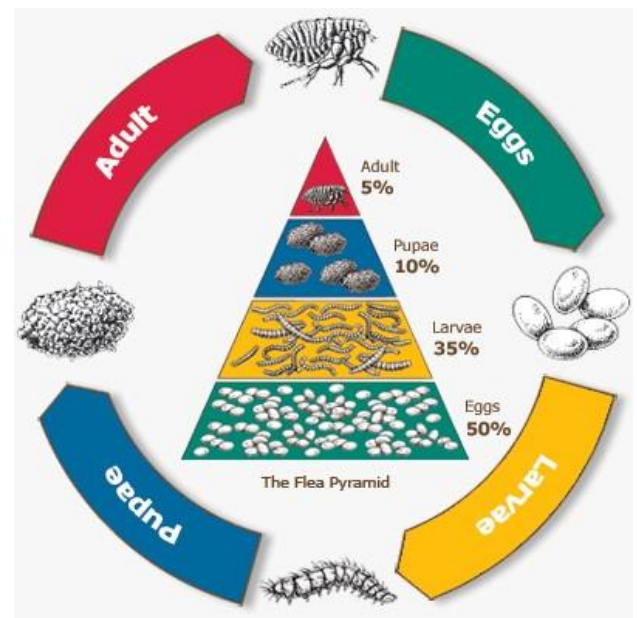
Whilst a flea is just a tiny insect, it has an Olympic standard high jump and an ability to drive pets and owners crazy. To get the best results with any flea control product, all dogs and cats on your property need to be treated.

The fleas that you notice on your kitten are adult fleas. These adults live and reproduce on the cat and can easily produce up to 20,000 flea eggs in their lifetime. The flea eggs fall to the ground (and carpet, kennels, bedding, etc) and develop via larvae (grub) and pupa (cocoon) stages, into new adult fleas which will then jump onto your pet in order to continue the cycle.

The best way to approach a complete flea control program is to treat both your pet and the environment (house and yard).

The most effective means of killing the adult fleas on your cat is to use a good flea product such as *Bravecto cat* or *Revolution*

As the diagram shows, the adult fleas are only 5% of the actual flea population in your house at any time.



7. DESEXING

If you do not intend to breed from your cat then you should have your pet de-sexed. De-sexing will prevent pregnancy through the removal of the ovaries and uterus in females, and the removal of the testes in males.

We have a responsibility to try and reduce the number of unwanted animals that are destroyed every year. Please think carefully before breeding and seriously about de-sexing. Some other things to consider:

- De-sexing can reduce aggression and makes cats less likely to mark their territory by urine spraying.
- De-sexing substantially reduces the risk of breast cancer in females if done prior to the first heat cycle at approximately 5 months of age.
- De-sexing decreases the desire to roam and hence reduces the risk of car accidents and fights. Cat fights are a major cause of cat bite abscesses and fatal viruses such as feline immunodeficiency virus
- A litter before de-sexing will not improve an animal's character.

8. COUNCIL REGISTRATION

Cats are required to be registered in NSW and we advise that your new kitten have a name and contact tag on their collar. Elasticised or "breakaway" collars should be used.

It is a good idea to have our telephone number engraved on the tag. If emergency treatment is needed for your cat, our number will place you or the person who finds the cat in contact with the veterinarian directly.

9. MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is required by law in Australia. It involves implanting an electronic marker under the skin between the shoulder blades. The chip causes no harm to the animal and the implanting can be done while you wait. If your pet is microchipped at Potts Point Veterinary Hospital your pet is registered both on the Government Register and on the Australian and New Zealand Animal Registry. If your cat does stray, authorities such as the Potts Point Veterinary Hospital have scanners which will identify your pet's microchip number and you will be contacted immediately

