

## Affordable Care Veterinary Clinic

### New Kitten Owner's Guide

First off, congratulations on your new addition, and thank you for trusting us in the medical care of your new cat. The reason for this information packet is to help us to help you along the first couple of months of your cat's life, which are arguably the most important as far as their health, behavior and general well being is concerned. During your first visit with your kitten, we discuss a lot of important things, and we know it can be quite overwhelming and confusing. So in attempt to put things to paper, here are the highlights of what you need for the coming months and years...

#### **VACCINATION SCHEDULE**

It is possible that your new kitten has already been vaccinated by the breeder, shelter, rescue, etc. We will look at that information and make decisions based on the dates, type of vaccine, trustworthiness, etc. Kittens need to be vaccinated every 3-4 weeks, ideally starting at 8 weeks of age, however, some will have been vaccinated earlier. It is not a matter of how many shots a kitten receives, but dependent upon these 3-4 week intervals until the kitten is around 15-18 weeks old. Sometimes a breeder will erroneously provide a new owner with a vaccine schedule that is inappropriate. Some breeders are well informed, but it is rare, so disregard any schedule or recommendations they have made. You can trust the fact that what we are doing is based on the latest scientific American veterinary associations schedules and recommendations. Depending on where you obtained your kitten, we will test him/her to rule out Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and Feline Leukemia.

#### **TYPES OF VACCINES**

All kittens need to receive what are called core vaccinations. The first one is what veterinarians generically call the **Distemper vaccine** (contrary to misconceptions, this has nothing to do with behavior). This is a multivalent vaccine that provides protection against the diseases and illnesses caused by Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia. This is the vaccine that will be boosted multiple times as a kitten. We will also vaccinate your kitten two times with the Feline Leukemia Vaccine. At the last kitten appointment, around 15-18 weeks of age, the first and only **Rabies vaccine** of the first year of life is given.

All kittens will receive these vaccines (Rabies, Distemper and Leukemia).

#### **DEWORMING**

Most kittens are dewormed by a breeder, shelter, rescue, etc with cheap, OTC products that are not considered broad spectrum, meaning covering many species and types of worms. Because of this, we always deworm kittens again with a product called Profender. This is a topical treatment and is usually only needed one time. If you didn't bring a fecal sample on your first visit, we need to have one at some point to be tested to make sure your kitten is parasite free. We will only call with fecal results if there is something that is not covered by the Profender (Giardia or Coccidia) in which case more specific medications will be required.

## **FLEA/TICK AND HEARTWORM PREVENTION**

Heartworm disease is just what it sounds like, worms that grow in the heart. While we don't insist on monthly heartworm prevention in cats, it is recommended by the American Heartworm Society.

Fleas and Ticks are a major issue for many cat owners, even if the cats are strictly indoors. Due to this, we strongly advise cat owners to treat for fleas year-round. Fleas carry a number of parasites in addition to being a major nuisance. Prevention is far less expensive than trying to get a flea issue under control.

Remember, we always recommend that you get all preventative medications from our clinic or another veterinarian if there is one closer to home. All we can do is stress...**DO NOT BUY FROM INTERNET OR PET STORES/WALMART/GROCERY STORES.** These products are not sold by the manufacturer to these places, and therefore the authenticity and safety cannot be determined. Due to this factor, the manufacturer's guarantee is voided, and any adverse reactions leave you and your pet with no support or repercussions monetarily or legally.

The following briefly outlines the products that we carry and recommend for your pets;  
ADVANTAGE MULTI - heartworm, intestinal parasite, flea prevention (topical)  
FRONTLINE GOLD - flea and tick prevention (topical)  
SERESTO COLLAR - flea and tick repellent/prevention (8 month collar)  
We will discuss the options with you and decide what is best for you and your pet.

## **SPAY/NEUTER**

So far we have protected your pet against devastating and sometimes deadly diseases and parasites. The last major step in caring for your pet in its first year is scheduling the spay or neuter surgery. We cannot stress enough the importance of this for your pet's overall health and behavior. We are adamant supporters of these surgeries being performed at 6 months of age, or before maturity to prevent major problems that can arise if not performed at this time. There are only a very few exceptions that we would not recommend surgery at this time, and again, trust us, we only have your pet's best interest in mind. We cannot tell you how many unnecessary cases of pyometra (infected uterus requiring life saving emergency surgery) or mammary cancer (non existent in cats that don't ever have a heat cycle), unwanted pregnancies (the list goes on) that we can avoid by doing these surgeries. If you are going to declaw your kitten, we recommend the spay/neuter and declaw be performed at 4 months of age to minimize the discomfort your kitten experiences with the declaw. Our doctors use an electrocautery surgical unit to perform the declaw, reducing bleeding and inflammation associated with the surgery.

So those are the basics in writing. Of course, each kitten, owner, and situation is different, and together we will do what is best and appropriate for everybody involved. Please don't ever hesitate to call with any questions. There are no stupid questions, and we can promise you we have heard it all. Thanks again for trusting us at the start of your kitten's life and we look forward to taking care of your cat for many, many years to come.

Dr. Greg and staff