



The SPCA'S Guide to Your New Cat/Kitten

Cat/Kitten Follow-up

Pets Name _____

Next Flea/Tick treatment due _____

Next rabies vaccination due _____

Next FVRCP-K due _____

2nd kitten shot _____

3rd kitten shot _____

Please refer to your pets health record for medical treatments already given.

If your pet is over 4 months old, you may disregard this section.

My pet is to be sterilized by the date _____.

The cost of sterilization and the rabies vaccination is covered in the adoption fee
IF DONE BY A HILL COUNTRY SPCA PARTICIPATING VET (see sterilization
contract for list of vets)

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Kitten Basics

Here are a few essentials you will need for your new arrival.

A name - Short names are easier for your kitten to recognize.

ID - Identification is a must! 1 in 3 pets will get lost in its lifetime. It is important to include your name and your phone number, you may also want to speak with your veterinarian about microchip insertion.

Food and water dishes- Ceramic and stainless steel are recommended.

Collar - Safety collars are best for cats. Any collar should fit snugly, but allow for 1-2 fingers width of space between the neck and the collar.

Grooming aids - A brush that is adequate for your kitten's hair length and a mild shampoo are necessities. If your kitten is long haired, daily grooming is must to prevent mats.

Toys - They should be large enough and sturdy enough that they can't be swallowed or chewed. Catnip is also quite a bit of fun.

Bedding - Soft bedding, like towels or blanket, placed in cozy corners will encourage your kitten to sleep there.

Carrier - The best and safest way to transport and travel with your kitten is with a carrier.

Litter box and materials - You'll need a box, cat litter and a scoop.

Diet: A well-balanced diet appropriate for your cats age group and activity level are essential. Adult for cats age 1-6, senior for cats over age 7, active adult, and growth for kittens up to one year are a few of the foods available. A growth formula is essential for proper development of your kitten's organ systems and immune system. Poor diet can lead to medical problems, including poor growth, joint problem, skin and hair coat problems, ingestion of inappropriate items and allergies to name a few. The quality of the ingredients is very important. A high quality diet can decrease stool production because your kitten is able to utilize more of the ingredients. Remember that not all diets are created equal.

Kitten proofing your home

Cats are curious by nature. You must be prepared for this behavior when bringing a new cat or kitten into your home. Store all dangerous materials in a tightly closed cabinet. You may want to get child proof cabinet devices, as many cats can open cabinet doors with their paws. Keep toilet lids down. Your kitten could fall in and drown. Store plastic bags out of reach of your kitten. Kittens love to play with and get inside plastic bags. These pose a threat of choking and suffocation. Keep household odds and ends, like string, sewing supplies, rubber bands, twist-ties, etc., away from your kitten as they are easily swallowed. Electrical cords should either be tacked to the wall or wound up and bound so your kitten won't risk getting shocked.

Many plants are poisonous to your animals and should be kept out of reach. Here are just a few, for a complete list contact your veterinarian.

Lilies (all kinds)

Azaleas

Daffodils

Leaves and stems of tomato plants

Foxglove

Hydrangea

Philodendrons

Mistletoe and poinsettia

Cats are independent and like to roam where and when they please. However, allowing access to the outdoors can expose them to injuries, poisons and infections. They become susceptible to disease, fights with other animals and traffic accidents. Cats allowed outdoors should be supervised and, most importantly, make sure your cat has some form of identification.

If you decide to allow your cat outside unsupervised, it is a good idea to keep it inside for around 10-14 days to allow it to learn where its home is. Slowly allow it to go outside under direct supervision until you are comfortable your cat's safety and ability to find its way home. Be sure to provide fresh food and water outside near your home.

If you are bringing a new cat into a home with an already established cat population, you should know that some fighting may occur. This is normal until dominance is established and they have a pecking order. This normally occurs with older cats but can also happen with kittens.

Training your kitten

Never hit or yell at your kitten. Instead, try squirting it with a water bottle, or shaking a coffee can full of rocks or pennies when it misbehaves. Afterwards, look away from your cat so that it associates this action with its bad behavior.

The scratching post - It's in your kitten's nature to want to scratch... your furniture, your drapes... But contrary to what you might think, it's not doing this only to sharpen its claws (you'll notice that even cats that have been declawed still do this). Cats scratch for exercise. They also scratch to mark their territory. Provide a scratching post for your kitten. It should be tall enough to let your cat stretch out along its full length. Your kitten will notice and use it more and more if you put it in plain sight. Playing near it or lacing the cat's bedding next to it will eventually draw your kitten's attention away from your couch. You may also want to spread some catnip over it every now and then.

Pouncing on counters and furniture - If you find your kitten jumping on areas you'd rather it didn't, remove it from that area and place it in a favorite spot that is already familiar and a place you approve.

Litter box training - Contrary to what many believe, cats are not born knowing to use the litter box. They must be trained. Most kittens train very easily. Place the kitten in a small room (bathroom, laundry room) with a litter box, food and water. Show it the litter box. Let this be his/her room for a few

days until you are sure it knows how to use the box. Try not to provide very much absorbent material other than the litter in the box. Maybe a small bed, but not too big. Cats are drawn to absorbent material for the elimination.

There may be times when your kitten has urinated outside of its litter box. There can be several reasons for this behavior. The first is easily fixed, clean and change the litter. Your cat may consider the litter box not clean enough to use. Be sure you are providing enough litter boxes for each of your cats to use.

Accidents can signal a more serious problem. Your cat may be suffering from feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD), a common and potentially serious problem. Symptoms include discomfort and straining, bloody urine, urination in small amounts and frequent trips to the litter box. This condition can be managed effectively if caught during the early stages. However, death can result within two to three days if the urethra becomes blocked.

Exercise -

Exercise is a vital part of your kitten's physical and mental health. Fitness is also the first step in avoiding obesity and the problems that come with it. They love exercise as well as the added attention they get from spending time with you. In fact, most cats get their exercise naturally through play.

There are many safe and inexpensive cat toys available today to help encourage your cat to play.

Although they've been associated with cats at play for years, string, thread, and balls of yarn are actually dangerous. If eaten, they can get lodged in the intestinal tract.

Safety tips to keep in mind - Pets like the smell and taste of antifreeze, which can be fatal if ingested and even small amounts. "Pet safe" antifreeze is available and less toxic to your kitten.

Keeping your new cat healthy

Vaccinations - There are many different vaccinations available for cats; this is just a list of the more common ones. Your veterinarian can recommend which vaccines are right for your pet depending on its age and lifestyle. At some time in their life, almost all cats will be exposed to a serious or even fatal infectious disease. Vaccination is the best and least costly way to prevent disease and provide good quality of life for your pet.

FVRCP - Is a combination of vaccinations. It stands for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia. Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus cause upper respiratory tract infection (sneezing, coughing, fever, nasal discharge and drainage, and eye infection). Panleukopenia is a severe, highly

contagious virus that can be fatal; it causes high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, and immune suppression. All of these disease can be fatal to a kitten due to their underdeveloped immune system.

**** Kittens should be started on the FVRCP at 6-8 weeks of age. They must receive 3-4 vaccinations at 3-4 week intervals to receive full protection against these diseases.****

Rabies - This virus cause a 100% fatal encephalitis in humans and all mammals. Texas state law **REQUIRES** that **ALL** dogs and cats be vaccinated between 12-16 weeks of age and then receive boosters once a year.

Feline Leukemia (Fely)- Feline leukemia is a contagious virus that attacks and weakens the immune system and can cause cancer in the form of leukemia or tumors. It is recommended that cats be tested prior to vaccination to determine if they are already infected. Any new cats or kittens coming into your household should be tested.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

There is currently NO vaccination for FIV. FIV is the cat version of HIV. It affects the cats the same way by depressing their immune system and leaving them open to disease they would normally be able to fight off. There is no cure. It is transmitted most commonly through bite wound, so outdoor or free roaming cats are most at risk. Neutering/Spaying can help decrease the urge to roam and fight, thereby reducing the risk of exposure. Regular check-ups will also help check for development of any symptoms of illness. *FIV is NOT contagious to humans.*

Heartworm disease in cats -

What is heartworm disease in cats?

Heartworm disease in cats is a serious and potentially fatal condition caused by the parasite *Dirofilaria Immitis*. This is the same parasite that causes heartworm disease in dogs. Heartworm disease in cats is a lot more difficult to diagnose and causes a more severe reaction than in dogs.

How do cats get Heartworm disease?

Cats get heartworm disease the same way dogs get it. Mosquitoes transmit the disease by biting and infected animal, then passing the infection to other animals they bite.

Is my cat at risk?

Texas has a high incidence of heartworm infection in both dogs and cats all year-round. Some studies estimate that more than 70% of cats may be at risk on areas where there are heartworms. For this reason, dogs and cats should stay on their heartworm prevention all year-round.

What are the signs of heartworm disease in my cat?

Many cats have no apparent signs in the early stages of the disease. Some of the more common symptoms seen include coughing, breathing difficulty, vomiting, sluggishness, and weight loss. Collapse, convulsions, and sudden death can also occur.

Can Heartworm disease be treated?

Unlike dogs, there is no current treatment for cats. Steroids and antibiotics may be used to help treat the symptoms and make the cat feel better. Most cats that are diagnosed with heartworm disease die within 18-24 months.

What can I do to prevent Heartworm disease in my cat?

Prevention is your best option since this is so serious in cats. Preventatives for cats have recently become available. You can give cats a flavored, chewable pill once a month to prevent heartworms. This prevention is a prescription item and only available from a veterinarian. Cats do not have to be tested prior to starting on the prevention, because there is not a reliable, inexpensive test to detect the disease in cats (this is not true for dogs - it is important to test dogs before starting the prevention). Even if your cat is already infected with heartworms, the preventative will not hurt him/her.

Intestinal Parasites

Most pet owners do not know that some intestinal worms of pets may infect people. These worms cause discomfort and illness in your pet, and in some cases cause death. There are many, many parasites of pets; these are some of the most common ones.

Roundworms (Toxocara sp.)

Prevention - Infected animals should be treated with an appropriate and effective dewormer. Once a month heartworm preventatives are available with an added ingredient to protect against roundworms. Good sanitation and hygiene is important, especially in children. Pet feces should be properly disposed of, particularly in areas where children play. Keep children away

from potentially infected environments. Keep sandboxes covered to prevent cats from defecating in them.

Hookworms (Ancylostoma sp.)

Tapeworms (Dipylidium caninum)

Prevention - Treatment with an appropriate dewormer. Most over-the-counter dewormers are not effective against this parasite). Flea control is the best prevention.

Whipworm (Trichuris vulpis)

Prevention - Treatment with an appropriate dewormer at frequent intervals since re-infection from the environment is possible. Most over-the-counter dewormers are not effective against this parasite.

Coccidia (Isospora sp.)

Prevention - Infected animals should be treated with an appropriate coccidiostat. Good hygiene to reduce environmental contamination, as well as stress reduction is also a helpful preventive measure.

Ecto-parasites

Fleas - Fleas are a parasite that feed by sucking the blood from its host (your dog or cat). This can cause a severe nuisance to you and your pet. Some pets are allergic to the bite of a flea causing a severe allergic reaction characterized by redness, itching, loss of hair, and even sores on the skin. In severe cases fleas can cause death from blood loss (anemia).

Control of fleas - There are many great products on the market that will control fleas. The best and safest products are available **ONLY** through your veterinarian. Most of these products will last for up to a month. This is a better investment than some of the look a likes at the grocery or feed store. These products actually work and most are guaranteed, so you can get your money back if you have a problem with the product.

Ticks - Ticks also feed by sucking the blood of its host (your dog or cat). They can also cause a severe nuisance to you and your pet as well as anemia and death in severe cases. Ticks can spread many disease to you and your pet, including lymes disease and rocky mountain spotted fever to name a couple. There are more tick-borne diseases that can cause illness in your pet. The best prevention is to control the ticks. There are several medications available through your veterinarian that is effective against ticks. Again these are a better investment and safer on your pet than some of the over the counter products.

Spay & Neuter Facts

- Dogs and cats should be spayed/neutered at 4-6 months of age if possible.

- ❑ Females do NOT need to and should not have a heat cycle before being spayed.
- ❑ Females do NOT need to have a litter before being spayed. There is absolutely NO evidence whatsoever that allowing a dog or cat to have a litter of puppies or kittens makes it a better pet.
- ❑ Spaying or neutering does NOT make your pet lazy or fat. Lack of exercise and too much food causes obesity. Altered animals tend to expend less energy because they roam less, so their food intake may need to be reduced.
- ❑ Spaying or neutering does NOT negatively affect your pet's personality. They will be happier pets because they will be healthier.
- ❑ There are many medical reasons to neuter dogs and cats. Neutering eliminated the risk of testicular diseases (such as cancer) and also prevents many diseases of the prostate. It also reduces the risk of certain types of hernias and tumors.
- ❑ Neutering your dog and cat reduces roaming, aggressive behavior (such as fighting), and urine marking in the house. It very significantly reduces the chance of a cat contracting the feline AIDS or feline leukemia virus by decreasing roaming and cat fights.
- ❑ Spaying eliminates heat periods and objectionable behavior such as spotting of blood and attraction of male animals.
- ❑ A pet spayed before its first heat cycle is SEVEN TIMES LESS LIKELY to develop mammary cancer than an intact pet. Mammary cancer is the most common tumor in intact dogs and the third most common in intact cats.
- ❑ Spaying also removes the possibility of uterine and ovarian cancer as well as pyometra (a life-threatening uterine infection).
- ❑ Spaying and neutering are considered routine operations since they are performed so frequently. The recovery time is usually short.
- ❑ Pet overpopulation is a tremendous problem in the US. Millions of animals must be put to sleep by animal shelters and veterinarians every year because of such TREMENDOUS overpopulation. Many more abandoned or homeless animals die from exposure and starvation. Having your pet spayed/neutered is responsible pet ownership and the ONLY way of reducing this incredible loss of our companion animals.
- ❑ Dogs and cats are domestic animals and cannot be turned out to "live in the wild". Animals that are dumped or abandoned often die a slow cruel death of starvation and sickness. Taking strays or unwanted animals to an animal shelter is the ONLY humane and responsible thing to do. If they must be put to sleep, at least it will be painless and humane.
- ❑ No veterinarian or animal shelter wants to put any animals to sleep, but what can you do with MILLIONS of homeless pets? There aren't enough homes for them all. There is not enough space or food for this many animals. As many animals as possible are placed in homes. The ONLY way we can reduce the number of animals put to sleep each year is by SPAYING AND NEUTERING ALL ANIMALS.

- If you choose to breed a pet and sell or give away the puppies or kittens, remember they are going to a home that a homeless puppy or kitten could have had.
- If you want your children to experience puppies or kittens, there are many ways other than breeding your own pet. Breeding a pet when you have no intention of keeping all the offspring only shows your children how to be irresponsible. You can visit the animal shelter or your veterinarian and teach them about responsible pet ownership.

Texas state law REQUIRES that any animal adopted from a humane type organization be spayed or neutered. Any animals adopted from this shelter MUST be spayed or neutered.

There is a lot of information in this packet. If you have any questions about anything you have read please feel free to contact the shelter or your veterinarian. We would be glad to answer any questions.

Veterinary Hospitals that participate with the SPCA
Compassionate Care 830-997-7643
Fredericksburg Veterinary Hospital 830-997-4308
Hill Country Vet 830-997-9576
Friendship Veterinary Center 830-997-9946

The following procedures are included in your adoption fee:

Spay/Neuter
Felv and FIV Test
Dewormed with a broad spectrum dewormer
Treated with Frontline for fleas and ticks
Rabies vaccination
FVRCP-K vaccination
Collar
SPCA ID tag

Ringworm Information Sheet

Fredericksburg has been hit with ringworm again this year. We at the HCSPCA would like to inform anyone who adopts a cat or kitten from us, just what to look for.

Kittens and those who are stressed (being in a shelter environment, new home, or put out on the streets), are the most likely to get ringworm.

What to look for: ringworm will show its self normally as hair loss, followed by a ring like lesion (red circle). Common places to look are around the paws, toe nails and also on the ears and face. If you see anything like this and it gets worse with time than you should visit a vet immediately.

Ringworm is a fungus, which can live just about anywhere. Ringworm happens to be one of the few illnesses that may slip by the shelters staff and vets as it can be dormant and can only be detected once the lesions have appeared. It is similar to athlete's foot in humans. It is easily treated with an oral medication or a topical cream, a combination of both works best. The main concern with ringworm is that it is easily spread from cats to dogs, or to humans. We highly recommend that you consult your vet for treatment.

We at the Hill Country SPCA do our best to prevent any animal leaving our care from becoming ill, but there is always a possibility this may happen due to the nature of adopting out animals with an unknown medical history. Please inform us if your new pet should have any illness so that we may contact other new owners and apprise them of the situation.

Thank you,

Hill Country SPCA