

Congratulations on your new kitten!



The following information is provided to help your new family addition make a smooth transition into your household and ensure he or she develops into a healthy and loving companion.

Welcome to Your New Home

Welcoming a kitten into your home is an exciting event and a commitment that may span as long as 20 years. Cats are not loners; they are very social animals that love your attention, but it can take days or even weeks to establish a relationship with a kitten, so please be patient. Kittens need time to bond with you before they become your best friend.

Being away from mom and litter mates can be a scary event. Give your new kitten time to become used to her new family and environment. Acclimation to new surroundings should be as quiet and stress-free as possible. If there are other animals present or much activity, your kitten may need to be kept in a separate room for a short time and allowed out when she seems more secure about exploring her new territory.

As soon as you arrive home, show your kitten her food, water and litter box. On arrival home with your new kitten, place the kitten – while still in the carrier in a suitably warm room where the kitten can be safely kept for a few days. Let the kitten come out to explore in her own time. Make sure there is a litter tray in the room and that the kitten knows exactly where it is. The kitten's room should also have a bowl of food and water kept a suitable distance from the litter tray. Cats are reluctant to use a litter tray that is too close to their food. Let your new kitten come to you in her own time. The stress of a new environment may cause her to have an accident. If this happens, just put her in her litter box and gently scratch at the litter. She'll catch on quickly. If she seems skittish, shy or refuses to eat for a day, don't worry. Just give her lots of love, petting and soft words, and she will quickly adjust. She may cry somewhat at first since she misses her mom and litter mates, but this will not last as she gets to know her family.

Kitten-Proofing Your Home

Kittens are curious toddlers in a four-legged body. Keep this in mind when bringing your new family member into your household. Some dangers include:

- **ELECTRICAL CORDS** – Keep all electrical wires out of your kitten's reach. 
- **BONES** – Forget them. Even if you had your cat for 15 years and gave him bones all the time and never had a problem. It just takes one bone to splinter and cause an intestinal perforation. Should your cat have a problem with a bone, think two words: **LIFE THREATENING.**
- **CHOCOLATE** – We all like to give our pets “treats,” but please don't put chocolate on your pet's treat list. The toxic element in chocolate is theobromine, which, depending on how much the pet has eaten, can cause vomiting, diarrhea, urination, hyperactivity, panting, muscle tremors, seizures and even death.
- **DANGEROUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS** – These items include ammonia, antifreeze, bleach, disinfectants, drain and oven cleaner, gasoline, medications (your prescription and over-the-counter varieties), paint and rat poison.
- **GREEN STUFF** – Cats are notorious for nibbling on houseplants. Many common houseplants contain poisons that can cause serious harm and even death. Some of the plants toxic to cats include: lilies, azalea, caladium, Christmas rose, clematis, delphinium, dieffenbachia, ivy, lupine, mistletoe, oleander, philodendron, poinsettia, cherry laurel, rhododendron, solanum and sweet pea. 

Poisons

Beware! Kittens are curious creatures!

Please call us immediately if your cat gets into any of the items listed below.

- **Human Medications** (non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, antidepressants, methylphenidate)
- **Canine Flea Insecticides**
- **Human Foods** (chocolate, caffeine, onions, garlic, chives)
- **Household Plants** (lilies, azaleas, rhododendrons and many more)
- **Household Cleaners** (bleach, ammonia)
- **Heavy Metals** (lead found in paint)
- **Fertilizers** (lawn and garden fertilizers may be ingested by cats just grooming themselves)

Indoors or Outdoors

The Humane Society reports that four out of five injured animals are cats, who can be exposed to numerous dangers outdoors. Traffic is the single greatest danger to cats, and even if you live on a cul-de-sac or are surrounded by open space, your cat is inclined to roam. Also, outdoor cats are more likely to contract feline leukemia virus and other diseases.

Cats confined indoors LIVE LONGER, safer and healthier lives. If you wish your cat to have an outdoor experience, consider these options:

- **CAT CURFEW:** Bring your cat in at dusk and don't let him out until late morning. Be sure that your cat is spayed or neutered, and clearly identified with an ID tag and microchip before you allow him outdoors.
- **CAT FENCING:** Some cats can be confined to your yard if the fence is 6 feet or higher. A low fence can be inexpensively extended with wire and vines or enhanced with angled cat fencing.
- **CAT ATRIUM:** A safe haven where the cat can “go outdoors” and watch birds, and where predators can't get in to harm the cat. It doesn't have to be big, but it has to have some up-and-down spots and a place for kitty to lounge in the sunshine.
- **SUPERVISED OUTINGS:** Only let your cat outdoors when you can supervise him. Working in the garden or reading on the patio provides both you and your cat companionship. Many cat owners use a harness and long tether line to keep their cat from straying.

Feeding Tips



It is best to feed your new kitten the same food that she has been used to. Any change in diet should be done gradually, over a period of several days, adding a little more of the new food each day. This will prevent digestive problems. We recommend a high-quality, dry and canned kitten food. The main goal of any feeding program should be to obtain the optimum nutrition available for your kitten.

When choosing dry or canned food, **read the label.** The first ingredient should be a meat or poultry product. Even though this cat food is more expensive, your kitten will eat less since a smaller amount will satisfy her nutritional requirements.

Nutrition questions – ask us!



My New Kitten



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Vaccinations

Your kitten will receive a series of immunizations so that he is offered the most protection possible against such diseases as distemper and leukemia. Your kitten's schedule is as follows:

- 6-8 weeks: Panleukopenia
- 6-12 weeks: Leukemia
- 16 weeks: Rabies

Sierra Veterinary Clinic has adopted a **Modified Vaccination Protocol**, a risk-based approach to vaccinations. Different pets have **differing lifestyles and environments**, and therefore different exposure to infectious diseases. After your kitten receives his or her first series of vaccinations, a **customized schedule** will be established according to your pet's needs and the latest scientific findings.

Panleukopenia – Also referred to as feline distemper, this viral disease is highly contagious and causes severe vomiting, diarrhea and dehydration. It is often fatal, especially in kittens.

Feline viral rhinotracheitis (FVR) – This is an upper respiratory infection caused by feline herpesvirus 1, of the family Herpesviridae.

Rhinotracheitis – This is a widespread, severe and highly contagious upper respiratory viral disease causing fever, sneezing, runny eyes and runny nose.

Calicivirus – Another major feline upper respiratory virus similar to rhinotracheitis but includes mouth and tongue ulcers.

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) – This is a common cause of disease and death in cats. The virus breaks down the cat's immune system so the cat is unable to fight off infections.

Rabies – A disease feared by all. The virus attacks the brain. There is no treatment available for pets, so the disease is always fatal. Pets are exposed to rabies by a bite from a wild animal.

Cat trivia – did you know?
Cats purr at about 26 cycles per second, the same frequency as an idling diesel engine.



Spay / Neuter

We recommend spaying or neutering your pet, NOT just for overpopulation issues, but because it helps make your cat a better pet.

Research has shown that altered pets have a longer life expectancy than pets that have not been spayed or neutered

Better health: Female pets altered before their first heat cycle have a significantly reduced chance of developing breast, uterine and ovarian cancer. In addition, spayed pets can't develop pyometra (an infection of the uterus) that can result in death.

Male pets altered before they become sexually mature can prevent testicular or prostate cancer.

Altered cats are less aggressive: Cat fights are a noisy nighttime activity that can be prevented by altering. Females will fight, too. Bite wounds require veterinary care. Even more traumatic is the anguish of your family pet being hit by a car. Unaltered cats come home injured and foul smelling, their coat gets scruffy, and their injuries can become infected. In addition, they will have less desire to roam the neighborhood.

Less behavior problems: Neutered males are less likely to mark their territory. Spraying is smelly, messy and offensive to everyone except the cat. It is easier to prevent spraying by early neutering than to cure your cat of this behavior when he is older and the habit is formed. Females in heat are equally offensive. They will try to scratch through window screens and howl endlessly.

Microchipping

Each year more than a million pets are lost. You can greatly reduce the risk of losing your pet if you provide it with a Pet Identification Microchip.

This "high-tech" mechanism is a tiny computer chip that is programmed with an identification number that can be scanned by veterinarians and animal shelters. The chip is small enough to fit into a hypodermic needle, which is used to inject the microchip under the skin of your pet. The procedure is not painful, and the microchip lasts the life of your pet.

The **pet identification number** programmed into the microchip is registered with a national tracking database system that can provide your name, address and telephone number.

Internal Parasites

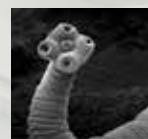
A fecal examination is a microscopic assessment of feces used to detect the presence of a number of parasites. If a test is positive for a parasitic infection, your veterinarian will start your kitten on a course of medication. To determine if the treatment was effective, we will retest the feces at the end of the course of medication. **Fecal exams are recommended once per year** as part of the annual health check and anytime your pet has ongoing diarrhea or soft stools.



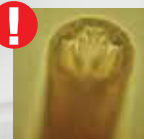
Roundworms



Whipworms



Tapeworms



Hookworms

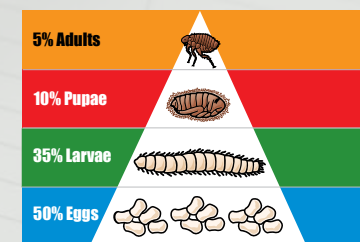
! Can be transmitted to humans

Fleas & Ticks

Fleas can cause a range of problems, including skin redness, excessive scratching, anemia in kittens, allergic reactions to the flea saliva or contraction of diseases carried by fleas.

It is much easier to prevent flea infestations than to treat them. We recommend a **ONCE MONTHLY** flea preventative for your pet beginning as early as 8 weeks old. **Remember, for every flea you see on your pet, there are hundreds more in your environment.** Successful flea control means treating both your pet and your home.

STRUCTURE OF FLEA POPULATION



Ticks live in tall grasses and heavily wooded areas, and can survive cold fall temperatures. It is important that anytime you or your pets are in these environments, a tick check be performed when you return home. **Be sure to check between the toes and behind the ears, where ticks love to hang out.**

Heartworm Disease



Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes, and it is a very preventable disease.

Heartworm affects cats differently than dogs but is equally as serious. **Studies have shown that 50% of cats infected with heartworm larvae have significant disease of the small arteries that supply blood to the lungs.** While only 5 to 20% of cats develop heartworms after being bitten by an infected mosquito, a majority die of the disease within two years.

There are no clear symptoms of heartworms other than a chronic cough or collapse and sudden death. There is no effective treatment for Feline Heartworm Disease. Your cat is most susceptible to FHD during the mosquito season. This is a very preventable disease; testing and giving your cat a once-a-month preventive medication can prove to be a life-saver. **Keeping your cat inside will not guarantee that it will not get heartworm disease. Mosquitoes can and do get inside the house.**



Dental Care

It is important to start early with your pet's dental health.

Routine home dental care should be a part of every pet's health care program. A program of oral hygiene and regular professional care can prevent problems that might occur as the result of plaque and tartar buildup. We recommend brushing daily, but if you find brushing difficult, dental rinses or chews are a better alternative in the fight against periodontal disease.

Dental terms you should know –

- **Plaque:** Develops when bacteria attach to the teeth.
- **Tartar / Calculus:** Develops when minerals in the saliva combine with the plaque and harden.
- **Gingivitis:** Develops when the tartar irritates the gums, causing inflammation (redness) along the gum line as well as bad breath.
- **Periodontal disease:** Develops when tartar is not removed. Tartar begins to build up under the gums and separates the gums from the teeth, creating multiple pockets, which in turn allows more bacteria to grow. **This can lead to loose teeth, abscesses, infection, bone loss and health problems affecting the heart, lungs and kidneys, which can all be quite painful.**

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